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# The Administrative Courage of Academic Deans

by

Karla Satchwell ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

Administration of Postsecondary Education
Department of Educational Policy Studies

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Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled **The Administrative Courage of Academic Deans** submitted by Karla Satchwell in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Administration of Postsecondary Education.

Sept. 12, 2003

# Abstract

Administrative courage of academic deans in Canada and the United States was researched using the methodology of heuristic inquiry to examine the personal experiences and insights of both researcher and deans while searching for the essence of the phenomenon. It involves six phases or stages through which the researcher progresses in an effort to come to know. These stages are: initial engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication, and creative synthesis, based on the work of Moustakas (1990). Eleven deans shared their experiences of administrative courage in personal in-depth interviews. Three major themes emerged; 1) the knowing of courage, 2) the doing of courage, and 3) acting in spite of fear or negative consequences. First, the knowing of courage involved understanding what was the "right" course of action, which was not always clear. The paradox of courage became clear in the phenomenon that while the deans believed that what they were doing was right, they were equally aware that they might be "wrong." Second, ethical considerations served to guide choices and provided reason to justify action. The doing of courage was an act of will summoning emotional or physical strength, metaphorically described here as "standing up" for someone or some principle. Relationships were significant to the experience of administrative courage, sometimes described as being called to action, or hearing a cry and feeling compelled to respond. While choice was involved in administrative courage, some deans felt as if they had no choice but to act courageously, even though their actions sometimes put them in great peril. This appeared to be part of the internalization of ethical action. The third theme was acting in spite of fear of

negative consequences: retribution, character attacks, threats to job security, loss of power or position and isolation. Deans experienced not only emotional but also physiological responses to acting in the presence of fear. Loneliness and isolation were experienced by deans who had demonstrated administrative courage. Most acknowledged the short "half-life" of administrators, a term coined by one participant, created by dealing with all consuming stress and experiencing serious personal illness and professional exhaustion.

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# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

The contemporary issues facing postsecondary administrators are staggering: accountability, lack of economic resources, aging infrastructures, demands for current technology, projected retirements of hundreds of professors without sufficient replacements, and stiff competition for top students. Challenges unique to the academy are also affecting administrators in the form of tenure, ethics in scholarship, research funding, grant competitions, and rising tuition. In addition, societal changes are affecting postsecondary education, changes in family structures, marriage styles, individual rights, religion, education, and technology. Within this context of significant change and challenge for postsecondary education, I explored administrative courage.

Courage can take many forms, from valiant acts of heroism to subtle, unsung decisions to speak out in support of another. In this study I researched the kind of day-to-day courage experienced by academic deans, the common and uncommon situations they faced, and the sense of responsibility and commitment needed to do the right thing.

I first became interested in the concept of administrative courage after reading a report written by John S. Cowan (1994), senior advisor for labor relations and human resource issues for the Association of Universities and Colleges in Canada (AUCC) and vice rector at the University of Ottawa. Cowan had been commissioned by Montreal's Concordia University Board of Governors to research and report on the events leading to the 1992 campus murders of four professors by fellow mechanical engineering professor Valery Fabrikant. The report stated:

> The failure of *administrative courage* at all levels, including that of the rector, is partly due to inadequate experience, a flawed understanding of what powers exist, and a failure to understand that from time to time the occupant of any senior post must risk opprobrium. It comes with the job. (p. 32)

Numerous accounts about the Fabrikant murders attempted to explain what happened and why. According to Cowan (1994), many considered the murders a predictable outcome of Fabrikant's 13 years of troublesome behavior. Seemingly ignored had been a rape accusation by a female student, verbal harassment of others, e-mail warfare about improprieties in scholarship and research grant appropriations, secretaries so frightened that they requested and received panic buttons in their work areas, and security hired to protect the rector and vice rector against his threats. Yet in August of 1992 Professor Fabrikant brought guns to campus and murdered four colleagues, none of whom were his intended targets.

Although the type of violence in the Fabrikant case is rare, the conflicts present are not. "Universities are both a part of and a reflection of the society in which they operate" (Bercuson, Bothwell, & Granatstein, 1997, p. 95), and they are "open communities, open to everyone, including the criminal bent on violence" (Tucker & Bryan, 1988, p. 144). Since they mirror problems within society, postsecondary institutions reasonably can be expected to be characterized by the conflicting political and economic demands of the marketplace. Because we live in a world where administrators must contend with numerous viewpoints relative to conflicting moral judgments (Begley, 1999), it appeared appropriate to me to study courage in terms of how we confront the unique and perhaps unfamiliar challenges of our time. If, as Schmidt (2001) proposed, "Courage is the freedom to fully engage the reality of one's life situation while remaining radically committed to overcoming (transcending) the Spirit-denying and life-denying aspects of one's experience" (p. 5), then this study should help enlighten the reader about the way that deans experience courage in their administrative lives. While remaining confident about the topic of courage it is important to realize that even extraordinary amounts of courage can fail to conquer spirit-denying and life-denying aspects of existence. One dean poignantly described his battle with cancer as such an example where demonstrating courage in his duties as dean seemed to deny him his own well being.

In human beings courage is necessary to make being and becoming possible. An assertion of the self, a commitment, is essential if the self is to have any reality. This is the distinction between human beings and the rest of nature. The acorn becomes an oak by means of automatic growth; no commitment is necessary. The kitten similarly becomes a cat on the basis of instinct. Nature and being are identical for them. But a man or woman becomes fully human only by his or her choices and his or her commitment to them. People attain worth and dignity by the multitude of decisions they make from day to day. These decisions require courage (May, 1975, p. 14).

## Relevance

Purpose in human beings is a complex phenomenon that involves all levels of experience. "We cannot will to have insights. We cannot will creativity. But we can will to give ourselves to the encounter with intensity of dedication and commitment" (May, 1975, p. 46). When I first encountered the term *administrative courage* in Cowan's (1994) report, it resonated with me. I began to contemplate the significance of this term within the context of postsecondary education. The purpose of this study has been to explore the experience of administrative courage through the stories shared by academic deans about times when they acted with administrative courage and times when they did not. This allowed them to evaluate their own decisions as administrators and perhaps make future decisions more intentionally from a position of courage, for "courage is an instrument of discovery, a self-reinforcing journey that begets confidence, that in turn enables courage" (Bogue, 1994, p. 105).

I began with an initial research question: *What is the experience of administrative courage for academic deans?* In my interviews I asked each dean to tell me about a time when he or she had experienced what he or she believed to be administrative courage and what that was like. I sought to explore subquestions in a further attempt to reveal the essence of administrative courage: Is one's own administrative courage recognizable? Were courage-building experiences of deans unique? What themes were present? In what ways were personal convictions (ethics, values, and morals) related to administrative courage? And what role does courage play in the lives of deans?

Deans often affect hundreds, if not thousands, of students, faculty, and staff. Depending on the specific contexts of administration, their decisions sometimes affect faculty budgets, personnel decisions, capital expenditures and appropriations, curriculum and accreditation decisions, and policies and practices regarding the education of future practitioners in their professions. As a broader purpose, this study focused scholarly attention on the phenomenon of administrative courage by encouraging the reader to view courage with intention and to consider choice manifested through courage as integral to leadership roles.

For the purposes of this research, *dean* is defined as the chief academic and administrative officer responsible for all operations of an entire faculty or professional school. As the leader of a college, faculty, or school, the dean is responsible for managing resources, developing new programs and academic policies, promoting academic excellence among faculty and students, and representing the college, faculty, or school to the public.

The term *decanal*, synonymous with deanly, is used as an adjective for things having to do with or pertaining to a dean such as a decanal search committee or decanal responsibilities. The term *moments* will be used to represent courage-building experiences identified by university deans in their careers that seem to define or shape their future.

## Rationale

I chose to study administrative courage within a university setting with individuals who have experienced it. I sought participants willing to explore courage and who held university positions that may have been acquired through or influenced by a demonstration of courage. I also found a group of research participants who appreciated the research process and were willing to contribute to a study on administrative courage. I chose academic deans because of their unique positions within the university and because I was familiar with the position, having spent nearly 20 years working on university campuses with and for deans. The deans I interviewed were frank, forthright, and generous in relating extremely sensitive material. I spent hours transcribing, reading, rereading, and coding their interviews and through this process have come to appreciate how truly generous they were in being so open with me about their personal experiences.

I became interested in heuristic inquiry (Moustakas, 1990) as a research methodology through my university course work and decided to use this methodology to.

explore a topic with which I could passionately engage, knowing that this process would consume several years of intensive reading, researching, thinking, and writing. Heuristic inquiry provided a process for investigating the nature and meaning of the experience of administrative courage through an organized and systematic paradigm based on phenomenology as interpreted by Moustakas (1990). My personal experiences, together with personal stories shared by the deans, became the foundation for self-awareness and self-knowledge by facilitating an exploration of the human experience of courage. Through heuristic analysis, I attempted to capture the essence of the universal experience of administrative courage by integrating other's lived experience with my autobiography, in ways advocated by Moustakas.

Throughout this research I have attempted to gain a better understanding of administrative courage by listening to the deans' personal stories. Bogue (1994) argued that the chief test of an administrator is one more of character than intellect. The 11 deans I interviewed demonstrated character through their concern for those for whom they were responsible and their actions or reactions to the many difficult situations they recounted. Sergiovanni (1992) stated, "Moral commitments explain the decisions people make and the behavior they exhibit" (p. 19). He asserted that for any action to have moral value, it must be done from duty and because of the belief that it is right and good. Through my research I investigated the experience of administrative courage to determine to what extent deans feel bound by duty, principle, and purpose. The interviews with deans allowed me to "capture the interaction of passion and principle, of ethics and effectiveness" (Bogue, 1994, p. 7), through the rich and vivid stories shared.

## Current Ethical Conflicts in Postsecondary Education

To understand administrative courage in universities, some exploration of the university context is an important preliminary step. Because courage is rooted in matters of ethics and purpose, the following discussion highlights ethical debates in postsecondary administration. The concept of university is connected with terms such as "reason, truth, knowledge, communication, understanding, openness, critique and freedom" (Barnett, 2003, p. 40). At times these terms have been subject to intense debate relative to their interpretation. Some believe that the current debate over ethical matters facing universities has been created by societal trends converging to cause uncertainty regarding ethics within the postsecondary education community (Thomas, 1996). According to Barnett, others proposed that universities are coerced to accept values that are not uniquely theirs, but that have been adopted from the market, state, and external stakeholders. Still others argued that universities are harbors with many sets of values, and providing space for competing values is exactly why universities are in business, yet the university does not give voice to these different value positions and in fact demonstrates value avoidance (Barnett, 2003). Others believed that the challenge is to maintain standards that cause both leaders and followers to raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality (Badaracco & Ellsworth, 1989). Sergiovanni (1992) pointed to moral authority as a source for leadership authority that gains its strength from felt obligations and shared values, ideas, and ideals; yet within an academic culture, powerful forces exist that make it difficult to respond courageously to disruptive, harassing, or threatening behavior. "Prominent amongst these is the recent and disturbing nature of what academic freedom means to some within the university community in

Canada" (Cowan, 1994, p. 6). Barnett (1990) believed that problems faced by postsecondary institutions are the result of undermining axioms, the first being the epistemological axiom that there is a realm of objective knowledge and recognized truths under assault with no apparent substitute in sight, and the second being that objective knowledge is most effectively maintained and disseminated in institutions that are relatively autonomous and in which the academic community enjoys comparative freedom (Barnett, 1990). Scott (2000) proposed that a transmodern philosophy will take the place of postmodernism by constructing a world view that demands a unity of scientific, ethical, aesthetic, and religions intuitions, a connection of knowledge and understandings in transdisciplinary ways.

Critics of North American postsecondary education (Axelrod, 2002; Gidley, 2000; Hayes & Wynyard, 2002; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997) have maintained that it has not done a good job of setting a clear sense of purpose, maintaining high standards, dealing with new students, appropriating funds, and adapting to the recent growth of postsecondary education. For instance, over the past 50 years postsecondary education has seen a significant shift from rewarding quality teaching to recognizing publishing and researching (Bercuson et al., 1997; Haworth & Conrad, 1997; Lewis, 1996). Current arguments have contended that postsecondary education has not dealt effectively with the massive forces of globalization, multiculturalism, politicalization, or marketization (Barnett, 2003; Hayes & Wynyard, 2002; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997).

In an era of diminished public funding for education, concerns about the nature of academic freedom, criticisms of the tenure system, and difficult fiscal decisions are among those powerful forces that administrators face as universities become corporatized, politicized, and "virtualized." Administrative courage may be an important asset for those wanting both to enhance the effectiveness of and to initiate improvements in postsecondary education.

The cold war era in the United States saw the beginning of a government-university-industry relationship that focused on universities as centers for basic and applied research. Many countries saw their federal governments assume funding responsibility for postsecondary education (Everett & Entrekin, 1987). Massive amounts of money were pumped into universities for research infrastructures, research parks, and collaborative venues. Along with this infusion of research funding, money for increased access for postsecondary education became more available. This resulted in opportunities at the postsecondary level for more women, ethnic minorities, handicapped students, nontraditional students, and displaced workers. The new students brought with them learning disabilities, job commitments, demanding schedules, and life experiences including children and families.

The transition from an elite educational system to one which educated the masses resulted in a lack of a clearly articulated, common mission for universities, yet many believe the primary mission of a postsecondary education is still to teach people how to think, and a basic liberal arts education remains the soundest way to do that (Bercuson et al., 1997). Critics of postsecondary education have contended that undergraduate programs lack depth, are disjointed, and have little coherence or structure. For example, Smith (1991) estimated that more than 6,000 different academic majors are offered in the United States. Information is becoming so specialized that intellectual frameworks in which to place and adjudicate it are becoming stretched and fragmented.

Postsecondary education has been charged with the transfer and creation of knowledge combined with personal development of the student and the training of individuals to benefit themselves and the community (Everett & Entrekin, 1987). A shift toward career preparation and away from traditional arts and sciences curricula has caused an "academic drift" (Everett & Entrekin, 1987). This further complicates the issue of a common purpose and ethic of postsecondary education.

## Marketization and Globalization

Marketization and globalization are contemporary issues facing postsecondary education. For many students postsecondary education has little to do with teaching and learning and everything to do with earning a degree and ultimately making money. This marketization of postsecondary education has had a tremendous impact on learning simply for the pleasure of learning, which does not seem to be highly valued in today's student culture (Lewis, 1996). Some have argued (Barnett, 2003; Bercuson et al., 1997; Fox, 2002) that the true reason that most students enroll in postsecondary education is to get a diploma in order to advance in a career.

Admissions standards have deteriorated, and many students enter the academic marketplace ill prepared for basic writing and mathematics courses, let alone courses requiring critical thinking. Remedial education programs are being offered by many universities and colleges.

Increasing tuition to help offset inadequate government funding has caused student debt loads to increase so that debt is an issue for most students, especially those from disadvantaged families, those least prepared to tolerate debt burdens (Smith, 1991).

Other impacts of inadequate funding include increased university class sizes, inadequate physical plants, and insufficient laboratory space.

The performative university, a direct result of declining government funding (Blackmore & Sachs, 2001), is judged on the quantifiable performance outcomes of funding and publications. In a market economy these become currency. Book and journal publishing are viewed as indicators not only that professors are involved in professional exploration outside the classroom, but also that they are contributing to the financial health of their institution. When colleagues refer to a faculty member's publications, words such as "measure" or "count" are used instead of "read" (Bercuson et al., 1997).

Teaching had been the dominant activity of higher education's 800-year-old tradition, and not until rather recently have teaching and research been perceived as anything other than mutually sustaining (Barnett, 2003). Yet there is little doubt that research is more highly valued than teaching in contemporary postsecondary education. Research has become the dominant activity in universities around the world (Barnett, 2003; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2001; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997), because it is more prestigious, offers more rewards in terms of promotion and pay, and provides greater employment security and marketability. Reward structures in postsecondary education place more emphasis on research and publications, thus creating a climate that encourages a "relentless drive to innovate for career purposes" (Hudson, 2002, p. 110). There is a natural tendency for faculty to gravitate toward professional activities where the rewards are the greatest. Universities clearly reward research over teaching (Ewell, 1990).

Currie and Newson (1998) blamed deteriorated working conditions of academics and the commodification of knowledge on the shift toward the market and managerialism. Marketization has created a distinct trend in postsecondary education toward a business driven culture, causing universities to undergo tremendous change and restructuring as business practices are adapted. But colleges and universities are very unlike corporations, and principles of management cannot be applied to both in the same way (Tucker & Bryan, 1988). A number of years ago I worked for a university's division of finance, which tried to implement Deming's Total Quality Management (TQM) model, the business model that Japan used in its reconstructing after WWII. Essentially, Deming's philosophy centered on quality improvement, decreasing costs, having fewer mistakes or errors, creating systems that helped the worker become more productive, and being competitive by having a better product at a lower price. This attempted conversion to the TQM model was awkward at best and ultimately went by the wayside, as did reengineering and other such initiatives popular in the 1990s.

Globalization can be defined as processes that have made the world smaller or compressed time and space (Currie & Newson, 1998). The instantaneousness of the Internet and virtualization are vivid examples. Gidley (2000) proposed that globalization and virtualization are the most offending forces of the dehumanization of postsecondary education and are bringing the traditional humanistic dimensions of the university to an end. Others (Pyle & Forrant, 2002) believed that the role of the university in sustainable human development relative to the changes associated with globalization has only begun to be explored.

In the final analysis, in the midst of these multiple pressures and conflicting purposes converging at the site of the university, most writers agreed that education has tremendous potential to make a difference between wealth and poverty, health and misery, conservation and destruction, and national unity and division. Postsecondary institutions are sites of both cultural reproduction and transformation and can wield extraordinary influence upon societal values, structures, and knowledge generation and application. The courage of postsecondary administrators confronting these challenges in times of sharp conflicts in ethics and educational purpose is, therefore, arguably an important phenomenon for study.

## Autobiographical Connections

Like some other forms of qualitative research, in heuristic research, explained Moustakas (1990), the investigator must have had a direct, personal encounter with the phenomenon being investigated. There must have been actual autobiographical connections" (p. 14). I will relate some of my own experiences with administrative courage to help ground my interest in this topic. *Courage*, as defined by *Merriam-Webster* (1999), is the mental or moral state to withstand fear. I asked myself whether fear must be present for courage to surface, or can a person act courageously in the absence of fear? In an effort to better understand my own experiences with administrative courage, I reflected on and wrote about times in my life that seemed significant to my own professional development.

I was a university residence hall director in my mid-20s, responsible for the operations and supervision of a 12-story building housing about 600 students. The job required that I live in the building in order to be available 24 hours a day, if necessary, to handle administrative and emergency situations. I frequently dealt with student behavioral problems such as fighting, roommate conflicts, threatening behavior, racial tensions, hate speech, drug and alcohol violations, and suicide attempts. These situations were often frightening for the students involved, but I did not perceive myself as being in personal or professional danger.

During my second year as a hall director, a series of situations occurred that did cause me fear. A female student who lived in my residence hall became a suspect in a number of purse thefts. During the police investigation, we became aware of bizarre and dangerous accusations about her, including putting broken glass in her blind roommate's shoes and manipulating furniture in the room to make it difficult for her roommate to negotiate. Other residents on her floor complained that she shared disturbing sexual fantasies of stabbing a partner during sex and holding him until he died.

This student became progressively more aggressive in a short period of time, and then one evening she attacked a male student in the cafeteria with a table knife. I immediately removed her from my residence hall and asked that she be expelled from all campus residences. My supervisor, after meeting with the student, allowed her to remain in the system but moved her to a different residence.

My son was just six months old at the time, and many of the residents in my hall regularly came by to hold and play with him. I worried that the student I had expelled might try to harm my son, and I was unable to tell the students who played with my baby about my fears because of confidentiality concerns regarding her disciplinary process.

At the same time that this was happening, one of my female student staff members told me that my secretary's husband had touched her inappropriately while she was visiting their home. My secretary had worked at the university for many years and often invited students, especially female students, to her home. I counseled my staff member to file a complaint with the university's police, and then I told my supervisor about the problem. He had been aware of similar allegations of inappropriate behavior by my secretary's husband but had not shared the information with me. The problem had not been dealt with, and many other young women had been victimized. While this case was being investigated by the police, a number of female staff members reported similar encounters with inappropriate touching from this man. Even a former female hall director told me of such an encounter with him. I decided to speak to the university's vice president about the way my supervisor had handled these cases. The vice president investigated my complaints, which resulted in my super ordinate being assigned to a nonsupervisory position in another department.

I believed that these situations were courage building events in my developing years as an administrator. I somehow knew what needed to be done and did it, in spite of the possibility that I could have been fired for circumventing my supervisor's authority. I felt compelled to do what I believed to be right. Had the vice president decided not to investigate my complaints about the handling of both the manipulative student's reassignment and my secretary's husband's behavior, I believed that I would have lost my job. I knew the "in spite ofs," yet felt compelled to act out of concern for the safety of my son and others because of what I perceived to be inappropriate administrative action.

Ultimately, the female residence hall student was expelled from the residence hall system. My secretary's husband took early retirement from his position as a university bus driver as a result of the investigations conducted by the university police. I was promoted that summer and two years later was awarded the position previously held by the supervisor whom I described. I continued to advance within the university's system, and a few years later, after I had assumed a director position, the same vice president asked me if I would consider hiring my previous supervisor to fill a vacancy on my staff because he had been having difficulties in the position to which he had been reassigned. I declined. As a side note, one of the deans in this study referred to this same person (my former supervisor) when discussing a problem employee during our interview. The problems addressed happened in the position to which he had been reassigned. The employee was eventually terminated (not long after I refused to have him reassigned to my unit).

Although this person was never mentioned by name during the interview, I knew to whom the dean was referring because of my extensive work history at that university. I found it challenging to listen objectively to the dean's story about this employee, knowing what I did. This situation brought up some ethical issues addressed in Chapter Four.

Bogue (1994) called courage "a measure of our devotion to principle" (p. 105). He stated that "every leader faces his or her own Goliaths, formidable foes whose size and strength appear overwhelming and strike fear in our hearts. If we are not courageous, our fear will clothe itself in reality" (p. 105). My professional career has afforded me opportunities to face challenging situations and make difficult decisions. I have not always acted courageously, but not only is the acting important; the practicing of courage encompasses reflection, contemplation, and possibilities that seem to help reaffirm acting in spite of one's fears.

## Assumptions

Courage is a topic taken for granted as understood, recognized, and recognizable; yet the moment that one tries to say what courage is, just what is being shown, it becomes elusive (Desmond, 2002). The deans indicated that their universities were places where knowledge was embraced, new discoveries made, and insights acknowledged. These institutions were devoted to learning, produced intangible products, and had missions that separated them from other public or private entities. Vast knowledge bases within university communities may perpetuate perceptions of common purpose and vision, yet collegial structures are often fraught with tensions (Henniger, 1998). Administrative appointments at the university level are often term appointments. Problems can arise when department chairpersons or deans know that they will return to the ranks of a faculty member after serving their term. Sometimes this means that personnel-related decisions that should be made are deferred for the next administrator to handle. Examples may include situations in which someone is fired but given no prior warning of performance weaknesses leading to the dismissal, troublesome employees with glowing evaluations on file, or reassignments of problem employees to avoid addressing performance issues. In my own administrative experience I found that dealing with human resource problems when they surface is imperative to good leadership, but such dealings are not easy. Professor Valery Fabrikant's employment history may be an example of an unattended or improperly attended problem that grew to disastrous proportions.

"Organizations, it appears, equate hierarchy with moral superiority," observed Sergiovanni (1995, p. 66). Thus, when someone near the top of a public hierarchical system falls from grace or demonstrates weakness, one can be assured that the problem will not go unnoticed. Maybe that is why the Fabrikant case captured my attention. It is not often that a well-educated member of a profession as respected as that of professor murders colleagues. One assumes that a person in such a capacity would have, at his or her disposal, superior problem-solving skills or at least the access to or intervention for them by other professionals.

Discussions devoted to leadership development and situations that shape character and courage deserve consideration. Perhaps determining what builds and develops courage may allow those preparing for administrative roles to become better prepared to handle the enormous challenges inherent in such positions. Enlightened research and proactive preparation may help prevent tragic situations from occurring, situations calling for courage but lacking administrators who can enact it.

## Significance

Courage is not easily identified, defined, or measured. That may be why it has been rarely studied, yet the concept of administrative courage affords intriguing possibilities. This research should contribute to knowledge in moral and ethical education, postsecondary administration, and leadership. The results may be of interest to those who aspire to become a dean, to those who currently hold such a position, and to postsecondary administrators who hire and supervise deans. Encouraging discussions and reflections about administrative courage aids in its practice and encourages crucial, well-timed, thoughtful, and value-driven decisions.

Cowan (1994) argued for encouraging and, in some cases, insisting upon management training for those appointed to academic leadership positions and recommended that in certain cases training should be a condition of appointment. As Tucker and Bryan (1988) suggested, it is true in postsecondary education that administrators come from faculty positions, have close professional relationships with their faculty colleagues and expect when their appointment is over to return to teaching positions. Many believed that they needed to "take their turn" in the administrative role, and all realized that they would likely return to work as peers of the colleagues they were supervising (Cowan, 1994). Cowan's description of academic administrators may explain why some found it so difficult to articulate courage.

> First, one must understand that the majority of academics who become academic administrators do not like administration itself, do not think of themselves as administrators, have no training for their administrative roles—other than modest on-the-job-exposure—and are accustomed to work in a milieu where the exercise of authority is considered in bad taste. Indeed, most expect to return to the ranks of working faculty after a brief sojourn in administration, and all are steeped in the important university traditions of academic freedom, pluralism, tolerance of eccentricity, and reliance on self-direction for setting tasks. Giving an order, even a reasonable one, is anathema to many. When faced with the challenge of a "bad" colleague whose behavior is disruptive, threatening, or merely unethical, they do not in general know what their powers are and are massively risk averse when it comes to exercising those powers, even when they are aware of them. There is a failure to recognize that there are general administrative powers that flow from the right and obligation to operate the enterprise properly (Cowan, 1994, p. 5).

This research served as a catalyst for deans as they reflected on their own experiences with administrative courage by "allowing them to think and explore a topic in a reality-altering impact of the inquiry process" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998b, p. 289) so that the deans gained a deeper self-understanding by recognizing and contemplating moments in their administrative lives that become turning points in their careers. While this observation begins to move into the process of methodology and findings which is expanded in chapters three and four, it is important to note how this phenomena began to shape my assumptions about the research that "most administrators just do not devote a lot of time and energy to reflective analysis" (Willower, 1999, p. 39). Allowing for reflection enabled the deans to explore events leading up to actions and decisions that they identified as courageous from the perspective of time. This was something that most told me they had not done through any similar types of processes. They appreciated the opportunity to reflect, and several mentioned making connections to past events, circumstances, or situations that were revealed to them during the interviews. However, this study was not designed to provide insights into the thought processes of postsecondary administrators.

Researchers, claimed van Manen (1997), have noticed that participants often invest more than a passing interest in the research project in which they have agreed to participate. They begin to care about the subject and about the research questions. In this study the test of time was compelling in regard to courage as well. Being reflective allows one to think back on one's career, life, and decisions. It can be said that time builds patience and, in some, a rich humility. Time proves both the value of one's virtues and the consistency with which they were displayed. "Time is the acid test that determines the credibility and morality of any leader" (Hawkins, 1997, p. 2).

As I began this journey into courage, I could not have imagined how rewarding this experience would become or how totally consumed I would be by the topic and heuristic inquiry as a methodology. I was awed by the personal, profound stories that deans shared, stories of not only facing their fears, but also of times when they had turned away, of moments too difficult to face, of decisions they wished had been different. I have been transformed through this work, from a student to a researcher, from a listener to an interpreter, from an interviewer to a participant; yet through it all I have deepened my interest in and appreciation for human virtues, most notably, courage.

During the writing of this dissertation tragic events that changed the world. The tragedy of September 11 being most significant. The stories of New York survivors, rescue workers, and family members were woven with narratives of courage as we heard about those who raced into burning buildings to save others, those who charged the cockpit to take down a plane, and countless other but no less important testaments of courage. These were demonstrations of humanity which would shape the future. Just as there were lessons to be learned from the events and actions on September 11, there are lessons to be learned about courage from everyday administrative decisions.

Chapter Two introduces the reader to literature on courage by engaging other voices and considering historical perspectives and related concepts and their relevance to postsecondary administration. Chapter Three presents heuristic inquiry as a research methodology and outlines this research model. Chapter Four describes the process for participant selection, data collection, and analysis; discusses the role of research ethics; and introduces individual research participants. Chapter Five examines primary themes which emerged through the interviews, considers metaphors, and synthesizes experiences with administrative courage as encountered by deans. Implications, outcomes, and potential for future research are presented in Chapter Six, followed by closing comments. References are listed and appendices attached that include sample research questions and letters of informed consent used to help ensure ethics compliance.

# CHAPTER TWO

# ENGAGING OTHER VOICES

Philosophers and scholars have long contemplated courage, a concept that, according to Tillich (2000), is where theological, sociological, and philosophical problems converge. Courage is contextual; its context gives it meaning. Tillich believed that courage "presupposes an understanding of man and his world, its structures and values. Only he who knows this knows what to affirm and what to negate" (p. 2). Others found that "courage eludes one the moment one tries to make specific what just a moment ago showed itself so strikingly" (Desmond, 2002, p.11).

Whereas studies on courage of deans were nonexistent, there is a growing body of literature relative to ethics and values in postsecondary education. This literature and literature on courage in its many contexts provided the background, insight, and knowledge base necessary for this research.

## On Perspectives of Courage

Courage is often depicted as an individually based, virtuous behavior. Framed from a Western perspective, courage is associated with that which is masculine and militaristic (Ivanhoe, 2002; Miller, 2000). Tillich (2000) described courage as strength of mind capable of conquering whatever threatens the attainment of the highest good. Tillich believed that courage is where theological, sociological, and philosophical problems meet, providing a way to analyze the human situation. Van Manen (1998) stated that the "etymological origins of words may sometimes put us in touch with an original form of life where the terms still have living ties to the lived experiences from which they originally sprang" (p.59). Miller (2000) and Desmond (2002) both identified the etymology of courage as rooted in the Greek word *andreia*: literally, manliness. The Greek word for courage is *andreia* (Desmond, 2002; Ivanhoe, 2002; Miller, 2000), meaning "brave," "courageous," and "masculine." Most Western notions of courage stem from this Greek origin, particularly those of soldiers, warriors, and combat. The English base of the word *courage* comes from the Old French word *cuer* and the Latin word *cor*, both meaning "heart" (*Merriam-Webster,* 1999; Skeat, 1958). The *Oxford English Dictionary* (1970) of historical principles lists four definitions of courage consistent with the French and Latin origins: (a) courage as the heart or seat of feeling, thought, spirit, mind, disposition, and nature; (b) courage as what is in one's mind or thoughts, what one is thinking of or intending, intention, purpose, desire, or inclination; (c) courage as spirit, liveliness, lustiness, vigor, vital force, or energy; and (d) courage as a quality of the mind that shows itself in facing danger without fear or shrinking (p. 1085). These historical roots differ from the Greek source and seem more congruent with this work on administrative courage focused on being and becoming instead of physical aspects of courage. The mental, emotional, or spiritual essence or strength is key as it was for Tillich, who wrote that courage was essential *to* being, and May (1975), who believed that courage was centered *within* our being. Tillich structured his argument around the ontological nature of courage as seated in the whole range of human existence and the structure of being itself (p. 1). Courage shows what being is; being shows what courage is. May, although drawing from Tillich's ontology of courage, framed it from a perspective of centeredness within our being based on commitment, choice, and intention.

Metaphorically, "just as one's heart, by pumping blood to one's arms, legs, and brain, enables all other physical organs to function, so courage makes possible all the psychological virtues" (May, 1975, p. 13). Etymologically, courage could be described as the essence or heart of human experience. According to *Merriam-Webster* (1999), courage may be defined as mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty. It implies strength of character when facing danger or extreme difficulty, and firmness of mind. This too is consistent with the English origin of the word. Courage is often used to describe the action of confronting danger and death, but as Schmidt (2001) stated, "Courage is a supreme virtue, its true nature and operations cannot simply be equated with an instinct, however bold or fearless" (p. 2). Philosophers have wrestled with the concept of courage for thousands of years. May saw a common thread in the works of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Camus, and Sartre that courage was not the absence of despair, but rather the capacity to move forward in spite of it.

*Administrative courage* can be understood as having the confidence to trust one's knowledge or belief about what is the right thing to do in a given situation and the ability to do that which needs to be done (withstanding, persevering, venturing) in spite of one's fears. Choice and decision, then, are important in administrative courage. Administrative courage, like other types of courage, involves not only choice, but also determination and willpower when facing danger or difficult decisions. Courage manifests itself in choice. The choice to learn through fear and doubt or through wisdom and courage is the choice of free will (Begley, 1999).

The word *administrative* originates from the French ministrare: "to serve." Might then administrative courage involve acts, decisions, choices "in spite of" the dangers, threats, or repercussions administrators face in their service to others? Administrative differs from *managerial* in that administrative pertains to persons collectively entrusted with the execution of laws and the superintendence of public affairs (*Merriam-Webster*, 1999). Managerial is the judicious use of means to accomplish an end or to have under control and direction (*Merriam-Webster*, 1999). Management places emphasis on handling things in the present (Judge, 1999), whereas administration sets its sights on the future. The "public" aspect of administration presupposes a responsibility to taxpayers and the general public to execute laws and policies. The term administrative takes on an altruistic purpose: that of being charged or entrusted to execute laws for the public good. This purpose works itself out differently in particular contexts of practice, and in the context of postsecondary administration.

In the process of conducting this study, the contextual characteristic of administrative courage became evident; thus I chose works that pertained to administrative courage within a postsecondary setting, works that held meaning for me, informed my writing, and became the philosophical underpinning of this thesis. Moustakas (1990) was one of the main voices engaged in this work, for it was through his methodology that I began my research. Many aspects of heuristic inquiry are woven throughout this work. Moustaka's methodology of heuristic inquiry is explained in Chapter Three. I refer to this methodology as the underpinning or foundation for my work because it was the way I formed my research question, informed my study, and deepened my understanding of administrative courage.

Over the course of writing this thesis, I researched courage and postsecondary educational administration at the University of Alberta libraries through their computer databases, in various bookstores in Canada and the United States, and through the web. I initially began my search by limiting descriptors to administrative courage, but, finding no references, I extended my search to values in educational administration, educational leadership, values, and conflict in postsecondary education. Some of the studies that most informed my work were referenced by other authors or were referred to me by my advisors, professors, and others familiar with postsecondary literature and interested in my study. In this way I found interesting and informative authors who wrote about courage from the perspectives of philosophy, religion, political science, law, and psychology; yet there was an apparent lack of literature on courage in the field of education. Authors from the field of postsecondary education wrote about morality, values and leadership in higher education, which may implicitly allude to the concept of administrative courage but their writings lack the definition and attention to the topic that this work provides (Hodgkinson, 1999; Bogue, 1994, Campbell, 1996). Thomas (1996), when researching ethics in postsecondary education, had to draw on works outside the field. She stated, "The postsecondary education community cannot rely upon the literature in other fields to serve as precedent" (p. 25). I also drew frequently from the views of May (1975) and Tillich (2000), who provided me with perspectives on courage and helped me frame this study in heuristic inquiry (Moustakas, 1990).

> The question is one that has been a personal challenge and puzzlement in the search to understand one's self and the world in which one lives. The heuristic process is autobiographic, yet with virtually every question that matters personally, there is also a social—and perhaps universal—significance (Moustakas, 1990, p. 15).

According to Moustakas (1990), heuristic inquiry is a form of engaging in a scientific search through methods aimed at discovering universal meaning through personal experience. “The deepest currents of meaning and knowledge take place within the individual through one’s senses, perceptions, beliefs, and judgments” (p. 15). May (1975) and Tillich (2000) were influential in helping me develop a deeper understanding and illumination of courage. Their works are aligned with those of Moustakas (1990) in that they move beyond the telling of stories to focus on the individual lived experience. Holstein and Grubrium (1998) explained that the theories, ideas, values, and attitudes that are applied to aspects of experience make them meaningful and allow for interpretation and an understanding of intention and motivation. May and Tillich both drew universal or ‘essential’ meanings from interpretative analysis of individual personal experience.

When I began my search of the postsecondary and educational databases, I found no reference to the term *administrative courage* in books, professional journals, and dissertations. In searching the databases of dissertations published in 1999 in the field of education, the word *courage* appeared in 34 abstracts. None of these dissertations studied courage of administrators, courageous decision making, or the essence of courage. Of this same set of dissertation abstracts, 222 included the word *fear*, perhaps an iconic example of anxiety, perhaps not; but because of the volume of these abstracts, I reviewed only a sample. Administrative courage is a topic that has not been researched. The only mention of administrative courage that I found was an occasional reference within the text of reports or articles. Because no published work on administrative courage exists and “there has been minimal, if any, systematic study on the inner experience of *being* a leader” (Judge, 1999, p. 3), my literature review was used to inform my study and deepen my understanding about courage as a virtue, courage and fear, courage's connection to morality and ethics, courage and hope, self-efficacy, and decision making relative to courage.

By employing the methodology of heuristic inquiry, I was able to pull from a wide variety of literary sources to inform my study in the search for the nature and essence of the experience of administrative courage. Resources that proved enlightening and significant relative to the topic helped illuminate courage. Because the heuristic process is a way of knowing and of being informed, Moustakas (1990) suggested that "whatever presents itself in the consciousness of the investigator as perception, sense, intuition, or knowledge represents an invitation for further elucidation" (p. 10). I used this as an open invitation to read broadly and widely to inform and enlighten this work.

## On Experiencing Fear

Fear is a part of courage and is something that can be faced, analyzed, attacked, or endured (Tillich, 2000, p. 36). Fear has an object or something specific in ordinary human experience (Rouner, 2002). Tillich believed that the courage to face fear is required of us all. For Desmond (2002), "Courage in the face of what I fear not only overcomes fear; it makes me a kind of person I was not before" (p. 19). Both read that the experience of courage changes a person. Affirmation of life or just 'being' requires courage as well as choice and is part of the process of personal growth that Desmond mentioned. Tillich also believed that by acting upon fear, one takes it into one's self-affirmation. Anxiety, on the other hand, has no object; or, paradoxically, its object is the negation of every object (p. 36). Participation with respect to anxiety is impossible, for anxiety cannot be named: it is helplessness, loss of direction, inadequate reactions, or lack of intentionality. Tillich asked, “Does not anxiety cease in the moment in which a known object of fear appears?” (p. 37). Fear and anxiety have been prolifically studied, especially in the field of psychology, but because the nature of this study focused on administrative courage, I chose only to introduce the existential elements of fear and anxiety relative to courage and did not explore them.

Most sources strongly connected courage and fear (Desmond, 2002; Evans & White, 1981; May, 1975; Miller, 2000; Platt, 2002; Servan-Schreiber, 1987; Tillich, 2000); but some, such as Walton (1986), did not believe that fear is essential to courage. Walton felt that fear is often present but not required for an act to be deemed courageous. This may depend on whether courage was defined by the actor or someone witnessing the act. Desmond identified four forms of courage: courage relative to vital self-insistence and courage that affirms life in the face of a threat, affirms a way of life, and affirms worth beyond my life and ways of finite life. Walton identified four dimensions of courage: the danger involved in the act, the presence or absence of fear in the person involved, the presence or absence of fear in the one making the judgment, and whether the act was witnessed (Walton, 1986). Witnessing courage places it in a contextual framework of not only the observer, but also the observed. The concept of witnessing courage is closely related to the politics of courage, which Miller discussed. According to Miller, the politics of courage relative to self-aggrandizement intricately connects to pain and fear.

The modern movement has gone further to “dephysicalize” courage by using it loosely to congratulate anyone who by his or her estimation undertakes some struggle for self-realization. Some of these struggles may indeed involve something like courage, but that will depend on the amount of real pain endured and the real dangers faced (Miller, 2000, p. 12).

Although the paradigm of the warrior (Desmond, 2002) or the courage of the soldier (Miller, 2000; Rouner, 2002) have been the standard Western model of courage since Aristotle and are consistent with many reflections on courage, I found Miller's view narrow; for example, he defined courage within a militaristic context exclusive of women and non-Western perspectives. He asserted, "Women's problem, broadly speaking, is that male anxiety about courage has important consequences for its ideological availability to women" (p. 13), and he clearly stated that much of his book "is about men confronting the anxiety of their defining virtue [courage]" (p. 13). Whether or not courage is the defining virtue of men and as such is unavailable to women could be the topic of a separate research study. Although Miller did not address courage from an administrative perspective, his work is still incongruent with that in the literature about leadership and its relationship to values and courage (Begley, 1999; Judge, 1999).

Miller's argument contradicted those of Tillich (2000) and May (1975), who do not 'physicalize' courage. Miller (2000) explored courage through the anxieties of masculinity: "Courage is about big fears only and then only about those of a certain dignity" (p. 205). His views opposed those who believed courage to be personal validation and an ethical, human act (Evans & White, 1981; May, 1975; Servan-Schreiber, 1987; Tillich, 2000). Miller couched his thesis in the context of militaristic metaphors. The majority of examples he used in exploring the mystery of courage, as he called it, came from battlefields. He contended that "courage and cowardice have a rich political and social history. They have inevitably been part of the ideologies that justify and maintain hierarchies of men over women, of rich men over poor men" (p. 11). Miller also stated, "So bound up is courage with manhood that it is nearly impossible to speak of it without invoking male body parts or the word for man itself" (p. 233). Although Miller framed courage from a Western perspective rooted in a male warrior culture, Ivanhoe (2002) saw courage directed more by spiritual energy than physical bravado. His view contrasted with Miller's, which excluded feminist and non-Western perspectives of courage. "One must cultivate a special kind of disposition in oneself in order to possess the courage to persevere in the face of danger" (p. 68). That special disposition to which Ivanhoe referred allows one to control fear and move forward in the face of danger. "The spiritual energy or the motivational force of courage from an Eastern perspective is cultivated by regularly and repeatedly practicing right actions and intentionally performing explicitly ethical, often political, actions builds one's own courage" (p. 69).

"Empirical research shows a negative association between relationship conflict, productivity, and satisfaction in groups. Fear in most references to administrative courage seemed to involve some sort of relationship conflict that interfered with task-related efforts because administrators were required to focus on reducing threats, increasing power, and attempting to build cohesion rather than working on the task (Jehn, 1997). When conflicts erupt in rage, the source is often a profound sense of injustice or unfair treatment, and the real tragedy of the ensuing events is that the sense of injustice is usually avoidable (Cole, 1999). Cowan (1994) sensed this as he discussed the Valery Fabrikant murders at Concordia.

Provocation, whether due to a real injustice or a personality disorder's skewed perception, often brings about anger, which in turn creates the perception of an unsolvable psychic state from which extreme tension or anxiety results (Cole, 1999). When an employee projects responsibility for such an emotional state onto the university or employer and begins to ruminate on the anger, acts of violence can be conceived against the individual in crisis or against those thought to have wronged this individual. This is an origin of fear in the workplace.

Miller's point that "no theory of courage can ignore war or the experience of fighting without being hollow at its core" (p.12) seems in itself to be hollow. May (1975) and Tillich (2000), for example, have written eloquently about courage, May never mentioning war or fighting and Tillich making reference to battle only in a metaphorical sense. Tillich took the position that courage is self-affirmation in spite of; that is, in spite of that which tends to prevent the self from affirming the self. "The key is the 'in spite of,' which defined courage in terms of what it opposes" (Servan-Schreiber, 1987, p. 74).

Miller (2000) addressed courage as not just a matter of being fearless, but as also overcoming fear or acting bravely in the presence of danger, being aware of the risks and stakes. He placed courage in the context of the battlefield. When one acts from a perspective of fearlessness, one may be ignorant of the danger involved or may have sufficient training to remove fear from the situation, such as in the case of persons trained for military combat. Without falling into the weaknesses of a narrowly defined context, overgeneralizing and a blatantly patriarchal exclusionary approach to courage that characterizes Millers (2000) argument, Tillich takes up a somewhat similar point. Tillich (2000) addressed the topic of fearlessness and fearfulness regarding courage as acting in spite of one's fears even though one may be fearful, something he called *sophisticated courage*. Ivanhoe (2002), although not using the same term, also defined the experience of sophisticated courage: “Feeling fear is epistemologically important; without a proper sense of it one can’t begin to deliberate or act rationally in situations of threat or danger” (p. 66). Although the literature on deans did not address fear necessarily, it was implied in topics such as conflict, risk, complaints, harassment, and competition. Tucker and Bryan (1988) referred to competition for economic resources as becoming “fierce and unrestrained” (p. 128) and proposed that “a dark side exists in human nature that most deans at some point in their decanal careers must confront” (p. 60). This may be the embodiment of fear for administrators.

## On the Nature of Virtue

“Virtue is the power of acting exclusively according to one’s true nature” (Tillich, 2000, p. 21). This notion of intentionality has long been important in Western tradition so that morality “rests on the individual’s commitment to do good” (Duke, 1999, p. 13). From a Western perspective, Duke claimed, virtues are perceived to be positive qualities, based in Judeo-Christian morality.

Christianity identifies the fundamental virtues as faith, hope, love, and charity. For ancient philosophers, the fundamental virtues were justice, truthfulness, and courage. According to Cuff (1993), courage gained importance among these virtues because it was through courage that justice and truthfulness were realized. Tillich (2000) identified four virtues: courage, wisdom, temperance, and justice. Courage, deliberate action combined with worthwhile intention, “is usually thought to be the same as heroism and virtue. It is offered to us as something exceptional and of great moral import” (Servan-Schreiber, 1987, p. 73). Miller (2000) stated, “To attempt to understand courage, or more properly, to confess to others some desire to understand, is to go a long way toward committing oneself to a proper respect for the virtue" (p. 44). I believe that through this process I have gained respect for this virtue but still struggle with the broad scope of courage.

In an attempt to define courage, virtues must be considered. May (1975) suggested that courage is "not a virtue or value among other personal values like love or fidelity. It is the foundation that underlies and gives reality to all other virtues and personal values (p.13). Tillich (2000) argued that definitions of courage must consider whether to use courage as a name for one virtue among others, "thus blending the meaning of the word into faith and hope, or to preserve the larger meaning and interpret faith through an analysis of courage" (pp. 8-9).

At one time educators sought to instill religious virtue; during the 19th century they focused on teaching the best that was known and thought (Axelrod, 2002). This meant that students had to absorb scripture or classics by thinking within clearly prescribed paradigms. Creative or critical thought was not valued. Although liberal education today encourages students to think creatively and critically, the dilemma about virtues and values has not changed much over the past 50 years, according to Gomes (2000):

> We are a sadder and somewhat wiser people now than then. . . . We know that our demons are not easily dismissed, that we yearn for more than simply the ability to get through the day. We would like to make a life and not just a living, which—as we know from our own experience and that of others—takes courage. (p. xxxi)

Thus courage as a virtue allows people to self-affirm, to think about and try to do that which is right, to live with ambiguity, and to anticipate change. Axelrod (2002) believed that postsecondary education prepares people to "live with uncertainty and to explore every conceivable facet of the human condition" (p. 147). Thus, there is a call for courage in today's educational system, for Brague (2002) stated that "courage and honesty are old virtues . . . welded together . . . and combine to produce the ultra modern virtue of intellectual honesty" (p. 47). It is the intellectual nature of this form of courage that takes on significance: courage to disregard opinions that do not have scientific or solid arguments, to challenge that which one has grown to believe, and to change one's thinking about old or comfortable practices.

## Perspectives

For centuries philosophers and scholars have tried to understand courage because courage has been so inextricably linked with humanity and is centered in being (May, 1975; Tillich, 2000). Because courage has been difficult to define, adjectives have long been linked with courage to help make it more recognizable. As early as 1300 the term *proud courage* was used. Shakespeare used the term *soft courage* in 1593 (Skeat, 1958), and the word *courage* appeared over 70 times in his writings (Hill, 2002). Courage, historically, has been represented by a variety of words and phrases (Hill, 2002), which may be why, when reviewing the literature, I found courage commonly associated with adjectives that helped to describe it. A sampling of these include commonplace courage (Servan-Schreiber, 1987); creative courage (May, 1975); defensive courage (Miller, 2000); heroic courage (Miller, 2000; Neville, 2002); martial courage (Ivanhoe, 2002); moral courage (Ivanhoe, 2002; Judge, 1999; Miller, 2000; Tillich, 2000); noble courage (Darling-Smith, 2002); physical courage (Miller, 2000; Tillich, 2000); religious courage (Desmond, 2002); social courage (Tillich, 2000); and sophisticated courage (Evans & White, 1981). Moral action does not always require courage, especially if the action does not put the actor in danger; however, when the help that one feels obligated to render does require facing a real or formidable threat, then moral courage becomes necessary.

The energy, often considered spiritual energy (Ivanhoe, 2002), necessary to face such a situation is associated with using an ethical foundation or a values-driven perspective to guide decision making and has often been associated with decisions and actions regarding suffering of fellow human beings. This kind of courage is also contained in the knowledge that the enemy is also my brother (Desmond, 2002). Moral courage "has come to mean the capacity to overcome fear of shame and humiliation in order to admit one's mistakes, to confess a wrong, to reject evil conformity, to denounce injustice, and also to defy immoral or imprudent orders" (Miller, 2000, p. 254). Physical courage, where an individual uses physical or mental strength to overcome adversity, is probably the most commonly associated form of courage; yet Miller stated that "it is easier than moral courage, easier to be shot at than to be laughed at and scorned" (p. 255). Creative courage is a willingness to allow the unconscious to become conscious in order to create new form and order (May, 1975). Tillich (2000) defined social courage as the courage to risk in hope of meaningful intimacy. Commonplace courage, according to Servan-Schreiber (1987), is not particularly virtuous. It is necessary for everyday life in order to live, to carry out the orders transmitted by one's will. Sophisticated courage is acting in spite of one's fears, out of fearfulness, not fearlessness (Evans & White, 1981). Acting in spite of one's fears (Servan-Schreiber, 1987; Tillich, 2000) identifies the presence of fear or anxiety. Administrative courage, although not identified in the literature, could be considered to involve a combination of social, moral, and sophisticated courage experienced in relation to others.

## On the Practice of Ethics and Values

If effective leadership is as much a test of character as it is of intellect (Bogue, 1994), then character matters. Bogue maintained that values shape a leader's realities and that leadership is a conceptual, moral, and performing art form built on ideas and ideals, as well as a solid philosophical and empirical foundation perfected in practice. He highlighted the traits of honor, dignity, candor, compassion, and courage and called them necessary in the development and improvement of leadership in postsecondary education so that courage becomes "a measure of our devotion to principle" (p. 105). Green (1997) argued that colleges and universities need administrators who have courage, patience, humanity, and vision; Kimbrough (1997) stressed that universities need administrators with the courage to face moral dilemmas and who have a keen sense of institutional policy and vision, common sense, courage and self-confidence, and caring and positive thinking. Whereas some authors referred to courage as a virtue (May, 1975; Miller, 2000; Tillich, 2000), others (Green, 1997; Kimbrough, 1997) associated it with traits such as vision, caring, and common sense. This is but an example of the mixed treatment that courage received in the literature, a difficult concept on which to build consensus.

Tillich (2000) believed that "the courage to be is an ethical act in which man (sic) affirms his own being in spite of those elements of his existence which conflict with his essential self-affirmation" (p. 3). Tillich focused on the ontological affirmation of the nature of being and courage (Rouner, 2002) and the courage that living requires of all of us.

Some administrators have called for direction to guide their decisions (Judge, 1999). This direction need not be religious, but should provide a compass, set by important life experiences that guide them (Badaracco & Ellsworth, 1989). This compass becomes the ethical framework by which an administrator sets his or her course. "Courage is both an acceptance and willingness to transcend, by act of modification, a world which is experienced as not intrinsically or essentially based upon justice, accountability or compassion" (Goldberg & Simon, 1982, p. 109). This willingness to transcend a difficult reality is important in the study of administrative courage. The context of administrative life is wrought with politics, bureaucratic practices, and conflicting rights and values that can obscure justice, accountability, and compassion.

Walton (1986) maintained that it was common for people to experience courage vicariously by measuring courageous acts in comparison to actions held by others to be courageous. Whether judged by the act, by the actor, or by the witness (Cuff, 1993), Walton thought of a courageous act as "one where an agent contributes to some highly worthwhile outcome by bringing about something very difficult or dangerous" (p. 133). The level of danger or difficulty, however, does seem to be dependent on the individual experiencing it.

According to Ivanhoe (2002), one must cultivate a special kind of disposition in oneself to possess the courage to persevere in the face of danger. He went on to state that "in order to aim at the good, one must have a clear sense of what kind of thing it is" (p. 68). Knowledge and experience help one recognize and aim toward the good and are "cultivated by regular and repeated performance of right actions" (p. 69). Administrative courage, I propose, is the courage that comes from such positional and situational knowledge and repeated cultivation of practice grounded and oriented toward the good. I believe administrative courage is rooted in experience and practiced over time, making it acquired, not automatic.

The fact that an acquisition of knowledge and experience are necessary not only to gain an administrative position, but also to practice courage within that context may be why, when discussing leadership, Badaracco and Ellsworth (1989) stated that leadership itself is rare and that most fail to recognize that people are motivated by a need to create and a desire to serve worthwhile ends yet:

> Very often the main problem is simply a lack of courage—not the valor of grand, heroic acts, but determination and honesty practiced daily in the small situations and familiar dilemmas of managerial life; the courage to do and say what one believes to be right, rather than what is convenient, familiar, popular; the courage to act on one's vision. (p. 201)

Following the right course of action; doing and saying what one believes to be true; acting congruently with those beliefs; possessing unremitting personal determination; taking direct, personal action; and gaining new understandings of impacts and roles (Morgan, 1998) are some of the foundations of administration. Transforming leadership occurs when one or more persons engage with others in a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality (Badaracco & Ellsworth, 1989). Transforming leadership has this in common with administrative courage because, like transforming leadership, courage necessitates reaching toward a higher level of morality. It strives toward that which is right. This is a fundamental aspect of the ethical action combined with challenge, risk and dilemma that comprises administrative courage.

Although researchers asserted that administration is fundamentally value laden and that values influence leadership (Begley, 1999; Hodgkinson, 1999; Judge, 1999;

Willower, 1999), there are parallels between values and courage. Because of this, administrators must have a clear set of personal values and act and live according to them. They must also blend issues of social accountability and consequence-focused or consensus-based decision making with their genuine, personal values. This may take courage to execute the duties of their position, especially when values collide.

## On the Promise of Hope

Each of us brings our individual theories to our work. Whether theories of suffering and hope or fear and courage, these theories provide meaning for our lives. *Hope* comes from the Greek word meaning "cord," "something to hang on to," "the essential thread woven through our existence" (*Merriam-Webster*, 1999). *Courage* comes from the French *coeur*, or "heart" (May, 1975). In this research there were implications for hope as moving beyond despair toward the promise of a tomorrow that may be different from one imagined, but nonetheless influenced by actively participating in hope. Through hope one can experience victory over anxiety and suffering. Hope actively works against despair, hopelessness, guilt, and meaninglessness. Hope, as a virtue, was made possible because of courage. Tillich (2000) used the metaphor of a knight to illustrate this concept:

> A knight in full armor is riding through a valley, accompanied by the figure of death on one side, the devil on the other. Fearlessly, concentrated, confident, he looks ahead. He is alone but he is not lonely. In his solitude he participates in the power which gives him the courage to affirm himself in spite of the presence of the negativities of existence. (p. 161)

Tillich stated that the knight was alone but not lonely; it was in the solitude that he found courage, the power of self-affirmation, or hope. Although this is a vivid metaphor, it is also misleading. The knight, dressed in full armor, was offered protection, as it were, from the evil surrounding him. Courage offers no such protection; in fact, it can create vulnerability while it embraces suffering as a part of humanness. Courage faces *nonbeing,* always present in life, as participation in something that transcends the self (Tillich, 2000).

Miller (2000) addressed a connection between hope and fear, for both are future directed. Whereas hope embraces positive expectations or expectations of good to come, fear focuses on the negative or expectations of future evil. Yet there is an expectation involved in each. “Fear does indeed seem to have an eye to the future even when calamity is already upon us” (p. 212). Hope accepts the challenge to confront a new situation (Farran, Herth, & Popovich, 1995, p. 20). In this confrontation, fears or risks are transformed through hope’s cognition, emotion, anticipation, energy, and purposefulness. The heart metaphor mentioned earlier ties hope to courage as the veins to the heart, making the image of hope essential in the practice of everyday courage (Platt, 2002); for, through hope, fear is transformed as the promise of a brighter, better tomorrow looms just above the horizon.

## On the Empowerment of Self-Efficacy

I began this research believing that courageous acts as a part of one’s personal experience tend to strengthen an individual’s self-confidence and belief in his or her power to persevere in spite of adversity. I also believed that the deans I would interview would have had moments in their careers that became career defining, moments in which they were required to act; and as a result of that action, their future careers were affected. This assumption correlates with self-efficacy theory, based on the hypothesis that all psychological interventions serve as means to create and strengthen expectations of personal efficacy (Bandura, 1977). "Perceived self-efficacy was defined as people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (Bandura, 1986b, p. 391). Bandura discussed outcome judgments and efficacy as being different because individuals might believe that a certain action will produce a particular outcome but might not act on that outcome belief because they question whether or not they can achieve or accomplish the activity. Bandura did not take motivation and ethics into account in his theory of self-efficacy. My initial hypothesis did not give these sufficient consideration either. If one does not consider motivation and ethics, then courageous acts may be more appropriately labeled as bravery or fearlessness. Within courage there must be a perception of the actor's ability to respond to fear. The key is the presence of fear and the barriers, negative consequences, and conflicting considerations that hinder action.

Bandura (1986b) described people who overestimate their abilities and tend to participate in activities that are clearly beyond their reach as mindlessly leaping into action without regard for their capabilities. In some ways this may be associated with fearlessness, yet someone who is fearless may be specifically trained for a situation so as to remove fear like firefighters entering a burning building. Bandura (1986b, p. 395) stated that those who view themselves as efficacious will act with self-assurance, set challenging goals, intensify their efforts when their performance does not meet their goals, and experience low levels of stress in taxing situations. Self-efficacy theory encompasses motivational change, affective reactions of stress and depression, psychosocial dysfunction, development of cognitive skills, achievement strivings and accomplishments, athletic feats, career choice and pursuits, and self-regulation of motivation and refractory behavior (p. 360). According to Bandura, self-efficacy operates in psychosocial functioning based on the commonality of the self-efficacy mechanism in human motivation and action, but he did not mention moral conviction. Instead, Bandura (1986a) viewed cognitive self-motivation as being influenced by three types of self-reactive influences operating together: affective self-evaluation, perceived self-efficacy, and personal goal setting.

Bandura's (1986a) view of success differentiates self-efficacy from courage, for when success or a favorable outcome is reinforced, it affects perceived self-efficacy without regard for character. Courage is an ethical reality (Tillich, 2000). Those who respond from the basis of courage do so from a sense of moral conviction. They may experience tremendous stress but continue to act in spite of the stress and in spite of their fears. Self-affirmation for Tillich (2000) is paradoxically "participation in something which transcends the self" (p. 165).

## On Courage as Decision Making

Numerous authors addressed decision making in regard to courage (Bogue, 1994; May, 1975; Tillich, 2000). Decision making often involves courage, and some of the most difficult decisions directly affect careers or self-image. "Desire, will, and decision are all in the realm of intentions …only courage permits them to be enacted in reality" (Servan-Schreiber, 1987, p. 73). The difficulty in judging an action courageous is in knowing why or how a decision was actually made. "What may appear to outsiders as politics or lack of courage is often a decision by a senior executive to act informally and privately out of consideration for an individual" (Badaracco & Ellsworth, 1989, p. 201). It is this internal, very private aspect of courage that has made it so difficult to study.

I found sufficient literature on decision making relative to postsecondary administration, yet there were no studies on decision making with respect to courage, possibly because administrative courage has not been studied as a reflective practice for administrators. Studies of the time and attention of administrators do not suggest "reflective decision making or the thoughtful selection of a preferred moral choice from among competing alternatives as a chief or even secondary aspect of administrator activity" (Willower, 1999, p. 39). Extensive studies have been done relative to the organizational structures of administrative practice, but the "consequences for decision making were not addressed [in these studies], and how administrators decide on one course of action from another is not very well understood" (p. 41). Therefore, when considering the responsibilities of an administrator,

> one inevitably notes the necessity to engage in decision making is a central expectation of the role. When that necessity becomes a burden, and the decisions become dilemmas, it is not difficult to imagine the moral and ethical significance of administrative choice. (Campbell, 1996, p. 70)

Campbell argued that the place of morals and ethics, within the context of an increasingly relativistic and subjectivist world, becomes ambiguous, obscure, unclear. The virtues of justice, truth, courage, and compassion, which have stood the test of time, have been largely disregarded, and "we have effectively abandoned the human quest for virtuous guidelines that point to fundamental goodness" (p. 64). These guidelines have provided structure for decision making for thousands of years, yet, according to Campbell, they have more recently been diminished as terms such as value relativism, and its resulting consequences make administrators reluctant to take or incapable of justifying action solely on the basis of inherent ethical and moral principles.

## On Deans and Courage

By virtue of their positions, academic deans have responsibility for hundreds, sometimes thousands of department chairs, faculty, students, and staff. As university administrators they are directly involved in the education of students. Deans have substantial impact upon their professions through curriculum and accreditation policies and practices. Their decisions can affect their faculty and institution for years, possibly decades to come. Bookhalter (1999) found many dimensions in the role of dean, including developing and maintaining quality undergraduate and graduate programs, fostering excellence in teaching and research, providing leadership for the selection of department chairs, ensuring that high-quality staff are recruited, providing direction for faculty evaluation, preparing budgets and obtaining faculty resources, setting priorities for the use of faculty resources, representing the faculty internally and externally, and establishing and developing partnerships. Although these responsibilities may be delegated, ultimately the dean is held accountable.

Deans influence the climate of their faculties, including the growth and development of their personnel and the quality of education that students receive. Deans shape the present and future of their professions by the policies they help to create, curriculum changes they implement, strategies they initiate, and direction they set for their units. Tucker and Bryan (1991) highlighted a dean's primary functions as (a) intervening among faculty coalitions that are creating an unacceptable level of disorder; (b) dispelling internal and external factions posing a threat to the faculty's integrity, value system, or financial well-being; and (c) guiding, inspiring, and encouraging faculty members toward excellence. Individuals who accept a deanship usually have been professors and have served in an administrative capacity such as a department chair or assistant dean. The majority hold terminal academic degrees and may be assumed to possess specific skill sets and abilities because of their educational attainment and their experience in postsecondary education, but this may not be the case.

Deans are in a unique position to see university life perhaps more clearly than others do, for they carry the responsibility of dealing with the myriad of problems that schools confront (Munson, 1994). Characteristically, deans are unique in that, although they operate in the middle, attempting to represent both the interests of the central administration and those of the faculty (Bookhalter, 1999), they are also the chief executive officers of their respective faculties. Because they are among the inner circle of university administrative managers, they hold a critical balance of protecting the administrative health of faculty and students while advancing the integrity and validity of the entire organization (Cochrane, 1997). This balance is continuing to evolve as universities are facing unprecedented changes in everything from the nature of the academic labor market to funding structures. Paramount within these changes are the influences of globalization of the political economy on the destabilizing patterns of university professional work. Globalization has created new structures, incentives, and rewards (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997). Slaughter and Leslie argued that destabilization may indeed bring about changes in the administrative structure of universities where administrators will respond to those elements of the institution that bring in increased revenues—academic capitalists and students (p. 243) and where administrators, not faculty, will decide which programs are vital and which are not. According to Axelrod (2002), the "university's inability to resolve internal philosophical and academic differences is the very source of its enduring vitality and importance" (p. 33). Academic leaders who respect philosophical and academic differences and who understand that universities are communities with identifiable purposes shall be leaders who play essential roles in the continued vitality of postsecondary education. There was much to suggest that postsecondary education faces many challenges in preparing students for the future. Incorporating an integrated approach to curriculum development that relates academic study to the needs of society, encouraging a stronger sense of social purpose, and instilling an awareness of one's responsibilities as citizens will serve to help prepare students to meet their futures, but academic leaders must also be encouraged to ethically and courageously confront the inherent challenges involved in such an educational process.

Schmidt (2001) proposed that courage allows one to confront the unique and perhaps unfamiliar challenges of new eras. If this is true, then courage is necessary for all who venture into postsecondary education, for "the task of higher education is to prepare people to live with uncertainty and to explore every conceivable facet of the human condition" (Axelrod, 2002, p. 147).

Tucker and Bryan (1988) wrote about the lack of courage of academic deans, that the most common fault in any academic administrator is "the fear of taking a stand" (p. 56). This stems from what they believed to be the fact that academic employees are more intimidating to supervise than corporate employees because they "believe they know as much about running the business of the institution as those appointed to do so" (p. 56). The knowledge stream in corporations becomes deeper and wider at the top. This is not necessarily true in academia. In corporate structures the chief executive officer knows more about management and leadership, has greater experience, and possesses greater wisdom and intellect than newly hired workers; but in universities academic administrators have PhDs equal to those of newly hired assistant professors. This creates tension relative to power in academia because it is difficult to exert power when those individuals being supervised believe that they know as much about "running a university or college as the president" (p. 56).

Personal dispositions of leaders influence the values and norms of behavior in universities so that a dean's power is identified with both a sense of purpose and a sense of being a real person (Hegyvary & DeTornyay, 1991; Louis & Anderson, 1998). Self-regulation of values and behavior, once possible in the autonomous university, is no longer plausible in an environment that is greatly influenced by ties between industry and universities and governments. The involvement by faculty with groups outside universities has led to opportunities for those groups to influence or control faculty research (Louis & Anderson, 1998). This has significant impact on the dean's ability to lead because at one time research was given prestige based on its ability to extend the boundaries of a given field, but now research that has commercial value is more highly prized.

Deans administrate within systems in which power is linked to technical knowledge and people who are capable of creating grant revenue and notoriety are empowered because of it (Arthur, Blais, & Thompson, 1994; Axelrod, 2002; Louis & Anderson, 1998; Tucker & Bryan, 1988), for universities need grants to survive. A review of the literature revealed that excellence in research commands greater recognition and rewards than does excellence in teaching (Barnett, 2003; Bercuson et al., 1997; Hudson, 2002; Smith, 1991). At Concordia University in Montreal, for example, the engineering faculty raised almost one half of the institution's research dollars (Wolfe, 1994). This is perhaps why power seemed rooted in the ideologies shaping the grant-driven academic culture. Axelrod traced some of the current concerns about the relationship between research and corporate sponsors to the Fabrikant murders at Concordia University, which led to an investigation into and exposure of inappropriate research allocations and conflicts of interest and caused the National Science and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) to change its grant structure. When research is production driven and publications serve as currency, "self interest, conflict of interest, and commercial competition have the potential to warp academic culture" (Axelrod, 2002, p. 108).

The business world does not hold the same ideologies as the academic world does, where cultural beliefs value academic freedom. Universities are tolerant of personal eccentricity, and sometimes faculty use academic freedom to defend practices that have little or no connection to academic issues. "Yet the confluence of extended notions of academic freedom, great respect for individual liberties and the rising tide of litigiousness has tended to restrain institutions from dealing expeditiously with problem cases" (Arthur et al., 1994).

Ehrlich (1997) suggested that a dean's success depends on choosing appropriate key goals for the school and having regular, formal reviews. There are many ways to define and analyze the pursuit and defense of interests (Morgan, 1998). Among them is motivation. The dean's work is largely defined by the dean and consists of meetings, conferences, paperwork, administrative duties, and personnel responsibilities. Lamborn

(1991) indicated that the length of tenure of the dean may assist in attaining and maintaining high degrees of motivation. Motivation was seen as a significant predictor of job satisfaction and success among deans (Lamborn, 1991), and the success of a new dean is directly related to the past performance of the previous dean (Hegyvary & DeTornyay, 1991). Perhaps that is why some university deans are reluctant to deal with conflict, to restrain some of their most distinguished and researchers who actively contribute to their growing reputation, or to divert funds from doing research to policing it (Arthur et al., 1994). Universities are environments in which publications serve as academic currency and those with profuse publications and large grant contracts usually benefit from funding, prestige and influence (Arthur et al., 1994). The theory of transitional phenomena contributes to an organizational perspective on how the unconscious resists or shapes change. "Change will occur spontaneously only when people are prepared to relinquish what they hold dear for the purpose of acquiring something new" (Morgan, 1998).

The dilemmas of administrative versus instructional leadership, accessibility versus efficiency, and increasing responsibility versus decreasing authority (Holdaway & Ratsoy, 1991) are some of those that administrators face in their day-to-day positions. There is a paradox of sorts, for the skills or characteristics that impress search committees—conceptual and technical skills—are not as central to the success of the administrator as the skills of human relations (Hegyvary & DeTornyay, 1991).

## Summary

Courage has been debated in philosophical circles for generations yet its discussion in relationship to postsecondary education has been largely absent in the literature. While a number of themes surfaced in the literature about courage including the relationship of courage to fear, virtue, ethics, values, hope, self efficacy, decision making and deans and while there is a growing body of literature relative to ethics and values in postsecondary educational administration, I found an apparent lack of research on courage in this literature. There seemed to be an implicit relationship between the literature about ethics in postsecondary educational administration and what I am describing as administrative courage; however, the term or concept of courage and its larger meaning of courage were not addressed explicitly in this literature.

Courage as a vital energy or essence of existence is aligned with meanings about what comprises the good. While western notions of courage seemed to more often include physical aspects of courage, eastern notions tended toward the philosophical. The literature addressed concepts of fear, war and combat relative to life-denying, spirit-defying aspects of courage by emphasizing an optimistic, positive, life affirming sense of courage. Miller (2000) proposed courage as a limited resource, one that could be diminished and depleted. Ivanhoe (2002) viewed courage as a resource replenished by use. Contradictions as such imply an incomplete or contradictory understanding of courage. While most of the literature focused on the hopeful, noble, spirit-defying aspects of courage, the deans portrayed courage less optimistically. Chapters five and six describe the deans' interviews and themes apparent in their narratives.

Courage, as an ethical reality, was addressed in the literature as intrinsic to being and humanity. The literature traced the nature of the virtue of courage as being aligned toward the good, right and noble. Virtues that complimented or enhanced courage were identified as honesty, faith, hope, love and charity. Tillich (2000) and Brague (2002) proposed a blending of courage with other virtues to create a larger meaning of the concept. The meaning of courage is influenced by adjectives commonly used to describe it, such as commonplace, creative, defensive, heroic, intellectual, martial, moral, noble, physical, religious, social, and sophisticated.

Researchers identified methods to enhance courage through its practice, thus enhancing and strengthening it. Ivanhoe (2002) suggested that such cultivation of regular practice of right or correct actions keeps one focused toward the good. Reflection was also suggested as a method for practicing courage. Walton (1986) suggested that by contemplating situations where a person did not act with, or by vicariously measuring one's actions against another's, individuals can strengthen their own ability to act courageously.

Woven through the works of Tillich (2000), May (1975) and others was the promise of hope and its impact on courage. This literature suggested that when two positive, noble virtues such as hope and courage are blended together, each enhances the other and collectively creates something more than their individual natures. Authors also explored self-efficacy relative to courage, concluding that while there are some correlates, courage is not the same as self-efficacy because character, motivation and ethics are integral to a demonstration of courage but not self-efficacy.

Decision making was a well researched theme in the literature on postsecondary education, yet studies of decision making and courage were not available. While there does seem to be an increase in literature addressing values and ethics in postsecondary education, academies are communities of pluralistic values which can make it difficult for administrators to justify their actions based on particular ethical principles. Admittedly, deans often must make decisions that require courage and they are in positions to be held responsible for the decisions of others. The literature argued for leaders who incorporate ethics and values into their administrative styles and who are willing to act courageously by taking a stand. This literature review allowed me to glimpse some of the significant work in the field of postsecondary education relative to ethics and values. However, I found that the main sources from which I drew insights about courage came from outside the postsecondary education field. These insights may help enlighten our field about a phenomenon which, while evident in practice, has not received the study it may deserve.

# CHAPTER THREE

# METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

## Framework for the Study

Heuristic inquiry, a research approach developed by Moustakas (1990), was the methodology I used to explore administrative courage with academic deans. The process of discovery through heuristic research "leads investigators to new images and meanings regarding human phenomena, but also realizations relevant to their own experiences and lives" (p. 9). Heuristic inquiry allows researchers opportunities to gain an understanding of possible lived experience through collaboration with research participants. This aspect of the model intrigued me because the researcher is central to the research and deemed by Moustakas to be a co-researcher. In heuristic investigation, self-awareness of the topic was essential: "[I] explicate that awareness with reference to a question or problem until an essential insight is achieved, one that will throw a beginning light onto a critical human experience" (p. 11).

A form of phenomenology, heuristic inquiry examines the personal experience and insights of the researcher while searching for the essence of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1990). This requires that the researcher live with the question "until that which was put to question begins to reveal something of its essential nature" (van Manen, 1997, p. 43). Heuristic research emphasizes relationships and connectedness. I have come to appreciate heuristic inquiry as a "kind of song into which the researcher breathes life not only because the question leads to an answer, but because the question itself is infused in the researcher's being" (p. 43).

Heuristic research was a demanding process for me,

> not only in terms of continual questioning and checking to ensure full explication of one's experience and that of others, but also in the challenges of thinking and creating, in authentic self-dialogue, self-honesty, and unwavering diligence to an understanding of both obvious and subtle elements of meaning and essence inherent in human issues, problems, questions, and concerns. (Moustakas, 1990, p. 37)

I chose to incorporate aspects of heuristic inquiry into my methodology for this research into the administrative courage of academic deans because with "virtually every question that matters personally, there is also a social and perhaps universal significance" (p. 15). Because the term administrative courage has personal, social, and possibly universal significance, heuristic inquiry seemed an appropriate methodology to gain a deeper understanding of and insight into administrative courage. Heuristic inquiry has six stages through which a researcher progresses. I attempted to incorporate aspects of these stages into this research.

## *Heuristic Inquiry as Guiding Research Methodology*

### *Initial Engagement*

Initial engagement is discovering an intense interest or a passionate concern that calls out to the researcher (Moustakas, 1990, p. 27). For me this occurred when I read the Cowan (1994) report about Valery Fabrikant's employment history at Concordia. The notion of *administrative courage* called out to me. I am not sure why this term struck me so deeply. I read dozens of papers, reports, articles, and books during my PhD studies, but this concept captivated me. I wanted to explore it and learn more about it.

Institutions of higher learning are highly regarded within society. When one from among the academically gifted acts out with violence or behaves inappropriately, it shatters the stereotypes of highly educated scholars. This study does not focus on violence on university campuses but rather on the decisions that administrators make when they are called to act with administrative courage and on the times that they turn away.

### *Immersion*

Once a question is revealed and clarified, the immersion process enables the researcher to become intimate with the question by being alert to all possibilities (Moustakas, 1990, p. 28). During the immersion stage, "the researcher is alert to all possibilities for meaning and enters fully into life with others wherever the theme is being expressed or talked about" (p. 28). Administrative courage did this for me. I thought about courage in my personal and professional experiences, saw courage around me, discussed courage with friends and family, was given books with courage in the title, listened intently every time the word was mentioned on the news, in a conversation at work, or in passing. Administrative courage became my focus, and everything around me seemed to revolve around this concept. According to Moustakas, this self-dialogue and self-searching were part of the immersion process. During the immersion stage I conducted my interviews, entering and dwelling with the stories as told by deans. This was where initial analysis of the transcripts began as I read and reread them from different angles and listened again and again to the tapes, searching for nuances.

### *Incubation*

During the incubation stage in heuristic inquiry, the researcher retreats from an intense, concentrated focus on the question; although the researcher is removed from an awareness of the question and its nature, expansion of knowledge is taking place on another level. This period of incubation allows the inner workings of the tacit dimension and intuition to continue to clarify and extend understanding on levels outside immediate awareness (Moustakas, 1990, p. 28).

During the incubation stage, according to Moustakas (1990), the inner tacit dimension of knowledge can achieve its fullest potential. A tacit understanding comes from being able to sense the unity or wholeness of something from an understanding of its parts. Additional qualities or new understandings were revealed during the incubation stage when the work was set aside for a while. It is in this period of rest that tacit knowledge emerges from a subconscious level. “Intuition is an essential characteristic of seeking knowledge. Without the intuitive capacity to form patterns, relations, and inferences, essential material for scientific knowledge is denied or lost” (p. 23). It is during incubation that these relationships and implications are most likely to develop, when the brain continues to process information on a different level.

I found that during periods in which I would retreat from intense study, I found myself making new and different connections between what I was reading and what the deans had relayed to me during their interviews. I found that I was renewed, refreshed, and encouraged to begin again. I once worked for a woman who believed that people need “thinking” time during the day, time to concentrate, ponder, and wonder. I do not always make time to ponder and wonder, for the hectic pace of a day whittles away these precious opportunities. However, working through the stages of heuristic inquiry, I permitted my self to wonder, to rest, and to renew, and the results were energizing.

Heuristic inquiry, like phenomenology, focuses on "reflectively bringing into nearness that which tends to be obscure" (van Manen, 1997, p. 32). Van Manen stated that

> making something of a text or of a lived experience by interpreting its meaning was more accurately a process of insightful invention, discovery or disclosure—grasping and formulating a thematic understanding was not a rule-bound process but a free act of "seeing" meaning. (p. 79)

I also continued to read about courage, sought linkages in the literature, attended lectures, and explored relationships through phenomenological writing during a two term course.

### *Illumination*

When the researcher is open to tacit knowledge and intuition, Moustakas (1990) explained, the process of illumination naturally occurs. Illumination may be an awakening to new aspects of the experience or may involve corrections of distortions or hidden meanings (p. 29). This may come to the researcher during a time when he or she is in transition or during breaks from intensive study. May (1975) discussed this breakthrough or illumination as requiring "the alternation of intense, conscious work and relaxation, with the unconscious insight often occurring at the moment of the shift" (p. 63). The mind awakens to creative understandings or illuminations by being open to new meanings. Sometimes people find what they are searching for when they are open and receptive. In this example, the professor discovered what he was searching for while dreaming.

An eminent New York professor related an illustrative story. He had been searching for a particular chemical formula for some time, but without success. One night while he was sleeping, he had a dream in which the formula was worked out and displayed before him. He woke up, and in the darkness he excitedly wrote it down on a piece of tissue, the only thing he could find. But the next morning he could not read his own scribbling. Every night thereafter, upon going to bed, he would concentrate his hopes on dreaming the dream again. Fortunately, after some nights he did, and he then wrote the formula down for good. It was the formula he had sought and for which he received the Nobel Prize (May, 1975, pp. 45-46).[1]

One dean I interviewed, whom I will call Ernest, gave an example of an illumination that became clear to him during our interviews:

> It's just absolutely interesting to me that the two people I have worked for who lacked courage were both male, and the two people that have demonstrated courage, from my perspective, were female. That's a revelation, because I have never gone back in time and thought about it.

For Ernest, as he reflected on what had been said and what remained to be said, he found connections linking his past to present so that "the sense of truth experienced in a good conversation leads to a satisfaction that asks for further work" (van Manen, 1997, p. 99).

### *Explication*

The purpose of the explication stage is to fully examine what has awakened in consciousness in order to understand various layers of meaning. The researcher uses his or her awareness, feelings, thoughts, beliefs, and judgments as a prelude to the understanding that was derived from conversations and dialogues with others (Moustakas, 1990, p. 30). For me, this was the stage in which the data were analyzed for the purpose of finding themes, descriptive portraits, and possible lived experiences with the topic. It was through the process of explication that I was able to make sense of the information gathered. The researcher "recognizes that meanings were unique and distinctive to an experience and depend upon internal frames of reference" (p. 31). It was this internal frame of reference that made heuristic inquiry so personal for me. This journey allowed me to "attend to [my] own awarenesses, feelings, thoughts, beliefs, and judgments as a prelude to the understanding that is derived from conversations and dialogues with others" (p. 31). For me, much of this process occurred while taking a two-term course on phenomenology. The research, reading, and writing required for this course and the intense emersion into my data allowed me to begin to apply "logos (language and thoughtfulness) to a phenomenon (as aspect of lived experience) to what shows itself" (van Manen, 1997, p. 33). I tried to write about some of the themes that were emerging from my transcripts in such a way that I captured the essence of the experience with language so that the reader would say, "Yes, that's it. I know what that is. I have experienced that." According to van Manen, the processes of heuristic inquiry and other phenomenological methods

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[1] Rollo May died in 1994. Because he did not cite the Nobel prize winner to whom he referred in this story, I searched the archives for Nobel Chemistry Prize winners who were professors from New York. There were five. Only one also served at Columbia University where May served, but there is no indication that Harold Clayton Urey was the professor to whom May referred.

> often have a transformative effect on the researcher himself or herself. Indeed, phenomenological research is often itself a form of deep learning, leading to a transformation of consciousness, heightened perceptiveness, increased thoughtfulness and tact, and so on. (p. 163)

### *Creative Synthesis*

The final phase of heuristic research is creative synthesis. After mastering the material, the researcher is challenged to put the components and core themes into a creative synthesis (Moustakas, 1990, p. 31). The illumination of the question occurs usually through a narrative depiction utilizing information from the research participants to describe the experience of administrative courage. Creative synthesis comes out of inspiration fueled through reflection, indwelling, and intuition. According to Moustakas, creative synthesis draws meanings from a particular world view and connections between self, other, and the world. As I worked through my data I realized that the themes that emerged from the research and the questions that I asked of the co-researchers were strongly influenced by my world view and the way I relate to others. My personal experiences and preconceptions form the basis for how I view the world. Yet as I became more immersed in the topic, I began to develop a deeper understanding of administrative courage by consciously being attuned to the voices of the deans. I tried to remain aware of how my experiences influenced the connections I made with my past experiences to those shared with me by the deans. There is a thread that connects our experiences and interpretations to those who participate in the study and those who ultimately read it. It is this thread or connection that weaves together possibilities and allows self-knowledge to be expanded.

### *Validation of Heuristic Research*

Validation in heuristic inquiry is not a quantitative measurement, for qualitative research deals with the study of human science, "persons or beings that have consciousness and that act purposefully" (van Manen, 1997, p. 4). Van Manen explained that "a human being is not just something you automatically are, it is also something you must try to be" (p. 4). It is in the *being* or the *becoming* that questions arise about human nature and in this case in particular, courage. "I may challenge, confront, or even doubt my understanding of a human concern or issue; but when I persist in a disciplined and devoted way, I ultimately deepen my knowledge of the phenomenon" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 11). Validity is determined by meaning in heuristic research. In heuristic research, the researcher validates his or her findings by returning "again and again to the data to check the depictions of the experience to determine whether the qualities or constituents that have been derived from the data embrace the necessary and sufficient meanings" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 33). The researcher's prolonged engagement with the data, constant checking and rechecking, and reflections about and appraisal of their meanings make it possible to develop a valid depiction. Researchers become so immersed in their work that they must take time to step back, reflect, check, and recheck so that their attachment does not cloud their objectivity about their findings, biases, preconceived notions, and expectations. My appraisal of the data and the processes I used for checking and rechecking the significance of the material and its meaning are further explained in Chapter Four.

## Coming to Know

Ontological inquiry is centered in the nature of what it means to be. Both May (1975) and Tillich (2000) situated courage as ontological — essential to our being. This research involved my coming to know what it means to be by exploring an essence of being — courage. Qualitative research, in this case heuristic inquiry, served as the vehicle for me to come to know or make sense of administrative courage by allowing me to focus concentrated energy on intuitive interpretations of this topic as I progressed through the six stages of this research model. Heuristic inquiry provided a process for reflection and internal searching that helped me come to terms with the "nature and meaning of the experience while developing methods and procedures for further investigation and analysis" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 9). Through the immersion process I became more open and receptive to the discoveries I found when searching within for a deepened and extended awareness as a way of being informed, a way of knowing.

Glesne and Peshkin (1992) stated that "the research methods you choose say something about your views on what qualifies as valuable knowledge and your perspective on the nature of reality or ontology" (p. 4). I wanted to know what deans had to say about courage. The essence or essential nature of something can be understood or represented through human descriptions of personal experiences. I have attempted to illustrate this using administrative courage, but although I would not begin to presume that mine was a universal depiction of courage, this process has allowed a much deeper appreciation for what courage looks like and how it is felt and experienced.

In the spring of 2000 I attended a lecture given by van Manen (2000), professor of education at the University of Alberta. This lecture became a pivotal turning point for me in my research, for I was introduced in depth to phenomenology as a research methodology and shortly after came upon heuristic inquiry, recommended to me by one of my professors. Van Manen discussed Levinas' concept of *past postmodernism* as going beyond *being* toward nonrelational relationality. According to van Manen, Levinas differed from Descartes, who focused on a preoccupation with individual being, presence of self, and subjectivity with his famous "I think; therefore I am." Levinas directed his focus toward the *other* so that the other stirs me to responsibility; therefore I am. The root of Levinas' concern was to establish the source of contact between persons or the source of interpersonal meaning, and in finding this meaning, Levinas found the ethical. For Levinas, courage is a relational, multidimensional concept, and it is the influence that courage has on the self and the other that was intriguing, for I found that courage was an icon for the ethical. "Only through continuous encounters with others does one become and remain a person" (Tillich, 2000, p. 91). The voice and presence of others is essential to relationships, responsibility, and personal and professional development. Just as Tillich discussed the influence of others on our individual becoming, so did Levinas (1981), for he argued that this moment in life chooses you; you are being addressed, you feel something, you feel responsibility. What you do with what you feel forms the basis for ethical thought and reflection. Although I am not a philosopher, allow me to argue that a sense of responsibility for another is critical to administration, which embeds the meaning of ministering or serving. Thus administration combined with courage involves a sense of responsibility for the other. Exploring the relationship of service and courage by studying the reflections of the deans and my inner dwellings brought forth concepts such as fear, loneliness, and witnesses to action, which I will discuss in Chapter Five.

The relationship between the researcher and what can be known about the phenomenon requires direct and active participation of the researcher seeking to understand the phenomenon's nature and essence. It is also dependent upon who the researcher is, for "where you stand will doubtless help to determine not only what you will research but also how you will research it" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998b, p. 179). There are multiple ways that humans view their world. The discovery process draws upon the tacit knowledge that allows the researcher to sense the unity or wholeness of something from an understanding of its individual qualities or parts (Moustakas, 1990) and the intuitions of both the researcher and those being researched. I have chosen to incorporate heuristic inquiry because its epistemology comes from attempting to understand the essence of the other's experience. The relationship between the researcher and the question is addressed through an immersion into the other's experience. I have found heuristic research to connect to my work, my counseling style, and my epistemology, for that is the way I know my world— through my experiences and vicariously through those of others. I have immersed myself in this process through heuristic inquiry in an attempt to understand administrative courage.

# CHAPTER FOUR

# ACADEMIC DEANS AS RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

This chapter introduces the reader to how deans were selected and invited to participate and how the interview process was structured and transcribed data were analyzed, addresses ethical issues anticipated or those that arose and how they were handled, presents portraits of the deans, and describes why deans were chosen as the focus of the study.

## Procedures and Criteria for Selecting Participants

I initially contacted 11 deans at universities in Alberta, Montana, Wyoming, and Colorado, because, for me, these universities were most geographically accessible. Of these 11, five I knew from my work previous to beginning my PhD studies at the University of Alberta. Three deans were referred by deans I interviewed, my advisors, and my committee members as individuals who might have been interested in participating in this research. The final three deans were contacted because they worked at universities along the geographic route I planned to take during my interview process. Due to the distance I lived from most of the co-researchers, the majority were interviewed once. Geographically, deans were from one Canadian province and three American states and represented the faculties of extension, education, health, commerce, and the arts. Two of the 11 deans were female.

All of the deans interviewed had something to say about administrative courage in their lives. Most indicated that they did not believe that they were courageous, but each identified a time when they had acted courageously. Because deans, or most of us, for that matter, rarely have the opportunity to discuss courage-building moments or experiences, the deans seemed very willing to share their experiences. I made initial contacts with each dean by telephone or through e-mail. Every dean I contacted was interested in the study, and all agreed to participate. After initially contacting deans, I sent the deans a letter detailing my research proposal, the participation parameters, and the ethics of this study, and supplied them with a list of potential questions. An interview date was also established. Trial interviews were conducted to assess how well my questions addressed the topic and to determine how much time would be needed for each interview. From these trial interviews I reassessed my guiding research questions (see Appendix A) and interview strategies and made necessary adjustments. Because of the uniqueness of heuristic research, the interviews were informal and conversational, consistent with the rhythm and flow of heuristic exploration and the search for meaning as defined by Moustakas (1990).

## Interviewing and Analyzing Transcript Data

In heuristic research, "one discovers the nature and meaning of experiences and develops methods and procedures for further investigation and analysis" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 9). Data are typically gathered through extended interviews that take the form of dialogues with oneself and the research participants. Accurate representation of collected data is dependent upon active, accurate, empathic listening; being open to oneself and the participants; being flexible enough to vary procedures to respond to the flow of dialogue; and being skillful in creating a climate that encourages participants to respond comfortably, accurately, comprehensively, and honestly in elucidating the phenomenon

(Moustakas, 1990). "Knowledge of the individual participant's experience as a whole and in its detail is comprehensively apprehended by the researcher" (p. 51).

I tape-recorded and transcribed all interviews and took point-form notes during each. I also kept notes of ideas, thoughts, activities, linkages, and concepts that I found valuable to my work. My audit trail includes raw data, transcripts, tapes, data reduction and analysis, field texts and research texts, synthesis results, and process notes. I used these as I continually read and reread my work to confirm accuracy and develop confidence in this research. Validation of this research was developed through prolonged engagement with the interview transcripts. Multiple readings allowed me to be more sensitive to the themes that emerged from the data. It is important to note that it was through my lens that this work was viewed. This research bias is important for readers to understand—what Denzin and Lincoln (1998a) referred to as "critical subjectivity involving self-reflexive attention to the ground on which one is standing" (p. 267c). Because I worked with these data for more than two years, I had the benefit of time to allow myself to think about many issues that incubated in my mind as I returned again and again to the interview data. The perspective of time allowed me to be reflective about my work and make connections to experiences.

My advisor read and reread my work, providing external reflection and input. She also challenged me to look at this work on administrative courage from critical perspectives to examine issues of gender, individualism, Western Judeo-Christian values, and traditions of North American postsecondary education relative to changing social circumstances that were evident in the participants' narratives.

Chapter five presents metaphors used by the deans during the interviews. By using language and figurative speech, these metaphors helped create meaning by using one element of experience to understand another (Morgan, 1998). I reflected on my research bias and my objectivity and subjectivity relative to courage and to my personal interactions and previous work histories with some of the deans. Each dean was provided with a copy of his or her transcript and the sections of my draft thesis reporting their stories to check the accuracy of my work, to confirm my interpretations, and to ensure credible portrayals of interpretations of their lived experiences with administrative courage. I also offered deans the opportunity to approve quotations I used from their interviews. This member check allowed me to clarify what was written and to make sure that I was representing them correctly. I tried to write in such a manner as to allow the reader to "understand the research context and what might be a possible human experience" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p.32) regarding administrative courage. My interview process is described in detail later in this chapter.

Continual reading of the transcripts and text helped me to ascertain whether the depictions I was developing of the experience of administrative courage fit the data from which they were drawn and whether they contained the qualities and themes that captured the experience (Moustakas, 1990). Aware of my subjective experiences with courage, I continually reflected on my preconceptions. "Critical subjectivity accepts that our knowing is from a perspective and that we were aware of that perspective and its bias and we articulate it in our communications" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998c, p. 267). My work was not intended to interpret the deans' experiences, but I am attempting to create or incorporate a possible depiction of administrative courage based on my experiences, these research data, and numerous readings.

Data analysis in qualitative research involves organizing the material so that the researcher can make sense of the material. This was done by searching for themes, patterns, categorizing results, and interpreting data (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). I began this process by reading each interview and making notes as themes emerged. Identifying themes, interpreting the data, and coding and sorting it helped make sense of the more than 150 pages of transcripts. Themes were then grouped together noting source and origination. I used tables to help sort themes and keep notations organized. Grouping material by themes helped me to narrow the scope of the material, making it more manageable. Additionally, I reread the transcripts, searching for metaphors that were grouped according to themes as well. I also wrote memos to myself about my findings, my thoughts, and important points in the work. Data were sorted into analytic files by interview questions asked of each participant, male and female responses, geographic differences, and so on. The process of data analysis served as part of my journey to make sense of the material as I found meaning for myself and future readers. From the data I selected situations and themes that I felt exemplified the experiences of courage. A textual portrait of these was developed and presented in such a way that the essences of administrative courage "emerge[d] in a vital and unified manner" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 52).

I also practiced wakefulness (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) or ongoing reflection about my work and its significance and tacit knowing illuminating the question in an effort to apprehend the meaning through a dawning of awareness (Moustakas, 1990). I worked to develop a depiction of a possible human experience of administrative courage, drawing from themes within the deans' interviews and reflecting on experiences with courage. This process helped me expose my biases. "By keeping track of your subjectivity, you will become attuned to the outlook that shapes your data analysis" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 131).

After writing a biographical depiction of my experiences with courage, I became more open to them. This process helped me to learn to trust my self-awareness and understanding and allowed me to enter the process more anchored to the topic.

> Preliminary awareness of one's knowledge and experience of a critical life issue, challenge, or problem enables one to begin to study the problem and concern. As the inquiry expands, such self-knowledge enables one to develop the ability and skill to understand the problem more fully and ultimately to deepen and extend the understanding through the eyes and voices of others (Moustakas, 1990, p. 17).

The final creative synthesis of analyzing the data collected through the heuristic process allows the researcher to tap "into imaginative and contemplative sources of knowledge and insight in synthesizing the experience [and] in presenting the discovery of essences" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 52). This process allows the researcher's passion and presence to be infused into the work with "a personal, professional, and literary value that can be expressed through a narrative, story, poem, work of art, metaphor, analogy, or tale" (p. 52). This creative synthesis was the culminating process of the dissertation.

Although most of the interviews took place in the deans' offices, one interview was conducted in a home and another in a coffee shop. Transcription of both of these interviews proved difficult. Background noise in the coffee shop was distracting for transcription purposes. The tape player in the dean's home had to be placed on a coffee table that proved to be too far away from the dean for sound quality to be acceptable. I would pay particular attention to background noise in future interviews and would use external microphones clipped to lapels to help reduce background noise. The internal microphone in my recorders picked up a great deal of background noise from fans, lawn mowers, and telephones.

I initially began my interviews by asking deans to identify a time when they had acted from what they believed to be a position of administrative courage. In the first two interviews the deans began answering this question with philosophical and abstract generalizations about courage. It took me longer in these interviews to uncover personal lived experiences. Beginning my third interview, I changed my format and began the interview by briefly discussing how and why I had become interested in administrative courage by relating the story of the Valerie Fabrikant murders at Concordia University in Montreal. This introduction seemed to help the deans to think about their experiences more quickly, thus providing more vivid depictions. Because this technique was successful, I continued opening with the same Fabrikant story for the remainder of my interviews. Self-disclosure seemed effective in prompting richer, fuller depictions from the deans as well. I am aware that this introduction may have biased the responses I received. Although research indicated that violent incidents are rare on university campuses, they do occur. When I asked the deans to reflect on their careers as administrators regarding administrative courage, several mentioned situations that could be described as having the propensity for violence or involving violence. They may have done so because of the introduction to the interview that I gave concerning the Fabrikant murders at Concordia University, a situation that ultimately resulted in violence. Others may have addressed violence in response to a horrific incident a couple of years previously on one of the campuses where I interviewed deans. Although this incident occurred off campus and the perpetrators were not students, the actions taken were against a university student and resulted in his death. The national media converged on this situation, and nearly all university administrators eventually had some involvement in the aftermath. But for the most part, deans had not experienced violence personally and only rarely had dealt with violence in their capacity as dean.

The interview method I used was congruent with heuristic research in that the conversations I had with deans allowed for dialogue to unfold as together the deans and I explored the human experience of administrative courage in the context of their experiences in postsecondary institutions. Heuristic inquiry engages the researcher with those being studied; Moustakas (1990) called them co-researchers. Heuristic research combines personal experience and the intensity of those experiences to explore the essential quality of the phenomenon. "In heuristic methodology, one sought to obtain qualitative depictions that were at the heart and depths of a person's experience—depictions of situations, events, conversations, relationships, feelings, thoughts, values, and beliefs" (p. 38). Each interview provided rich and meaningful narratives. These were threaded together to form the basis for my study into the deans' experiences with administrative courage. Language and its meaning became significant. "Language is the symbolic repository of the meaningful experience of ourselves and our fellow human beings down through history" (May, 1975, p. 85).

I immersed myself in thinking about courage and its impact on my life and career. Moustakas (1990), reflecting on his heuristic inquiry into loneliness, stated, "When I began to study loneliness it became the center of my world. Every event, every feature of my existence appeared to me to be connected with loneliness" (p. 45). In my reflections on my inquiry into courage, I too have begun to see it all around me, I have felt it within me, and I have listened to others talk about their experiences. I began this journey into administrative courage by writing about experiences in my life that embraced courage and then immersed myself in the process by listening to the stories of deans. Through the process of heuristic inquiry, I have sought a deeper understanding about and a new awareness of courage.

## Addressing Ethical Issues

Because it is the responsibility of the researcher not to cause harm to the participants, confidentiality was given careful consideration. Throughout my thesis deans have been referred to by pseudonyms in an effort to protect identity. There were many situations in which deans made it clear that the information they were providing was confidential and must remain so. Many addressed sensitive human resource issues, identified individuals by name, and were forthcoming with personal, heart-felt depictions of their experiences. I imagine that there were those who were guarded in what they told me because of the sensitive nature of some administrative issues or because of confidentiality concerns, yet the wealth of information the deans revealed was overwhelming. I feel honored that they would share so much about their personal experiences with me during these interviews. I was allowed access into their inner worlds, if only for a brief time, to listen to their situations, circumstances, and events in their lives that were often painful, emotional, and truly personal. One dean appeared to be exceedingly cautious, almost guarded when he spoke of people and situations. I had worked with this dean previously, and he was aware that I knew many of the situations and people about whom he spoke. This may be why he seemed guarded. I found that the deans I did not know previous to the interviews provided more detailed accounts of situations in which they had acted with courage and in which they had not. They seemed a bit freer to discuss very personal situations possibly because of the fact that I did not know them or the situations and people of whom they spoke. This may have implied a greater sense of confidentiality, analogous to sharing intimate details about work or life with the person sitting next to you on an airplane, someone you did not know before sitting down together, and someone you don't expect to meet again.

All information collected was held in strict confidence and was used only for the purposes of this research. I also came to understand that I held a unique relationship with several of the participants, having previously worked with five of them. This proved beneficial in that they were readily accessible and interested in participating in my study, but I believed that they might have been guarded in what they told me because they knew that I knew many of the people in the situations about which they spoke. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) stated, "Sticky matters arise over shared moments, intimacies, secrets, and the desire to find a place for them in the research text" (p. 149). I do not indicate which deans I had previously known before the interviews to help protect their identities, but I came away from the interviews with secrets and shared intimacies.

> There is a limit to what we are able to share with others. The person who converses with us and expresses certain thoughts to us may intend no secrecy. And yet we feel that there are natural limits to interpersonal understanding—and

> these limits can somehow be experienced as keeping secrets. (van Manen & Levering, 1996, p. 12)

I struggled at times with ways to represent particular situations that might identify deans in my text. In these situations I presented the text to the dean to review and edit if necessary. I used pseudonyms throughout my work and attempted to remove identifying characteristics to disguise the identity of each dean, yet because of the unique situations relayed, many of the situations were identifiable by the dean who shared them and may have been identifiable by other readers familiar with certain campus incidents. The geographic distance of participants and interviewing deans at four universities in the United States and Canada was intentional, to help ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

There were many situations in which the deans made it clear that the information they were providing was confidential and must remain so. If I believed it impossible to protect the identity of the research participant and he or she believed that privacy was problematic, I did not include that dean's story, although I drew upon all narratives to determine themes and analyze the experience of administrative courage. It was interesting though that many of the deans addressed incidents that were similar in nature even through they occurred on different campuses in different states. For instance, two deans at two separate universities talked about dealing with faculty members who were living in their campus offices. All deans addressed sensitive human resource issues, many related to tenure. Although some identified individuals by name, most tried not to do so. The majority of deans were also surprisingly forthcoming with personal, heart-felt depictions of their experiences. Even those deans I had known before the interviews were quite candid about personal topics such as spirituality. I imagine that some did not share situations dealing with administrative courage because of their sensitivity or particular circumstances, yet the wealth of information they did share was overwhelming.

Those who participated did so freely. I made every effort to ensure that no harm resulted from this research, specifically to the reputations of the participants, those they mentioned in their stories of administrative courage, or their institutions, by carefully protecting the privacy of the research participant. No deception was used in this study, and any secondary uses of the data such as inclusion in articles submitted to journals will observe the same ethical principles and standards as described to avoid harm to the participants, those they mentioned during the research process, and their institutions. I explained the nature and purpose of the study to the deans, then asked to sign a consent form attached in Appendix B, agreeing to participate in the study. The consent form outlined the manner in which issues of confidentiality were addressed and indicated that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time for any reason. If they chose to withdraw, I assured them that I would remove their transcripts and notes and would not use their data. If the deans had questions about their participation in this research or had concerns or complaints, they were encouraged to contact my research supervisors, whose phone numbers were provided to the deans. I did not use assistants in collecting data, but I did hire a transcriber to assist with the interview transcription process. I ensured that the person transcribing the tapes knew the ethical principles and signed a statement attesting to such. The names and identification of research participants were disguised as much as possible, and data and notes were kept secure during the entire process and will continue to be kept secure after the completion of this thesis.

This research is not intended to be generalizable. I investigated the phenomenon of administrative courage with what I trust was sufficient depth and detail that readers will be able to understand and connect with the possible human experiences of administrative courage represented in this research and their career situations and experiences. I have attempted to represent "vividly and accurately the meanings and essences of the experience" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 32). In the uniqueness of the situations of administrative courage as relayed by deans, I sought to portray the essence in such a way that the reader might experience a nod of recognition, a prick of recollection, or a stirring of the soul with respect to the meaningfulness of administrative courage; thus through language the reader will contact and embrace the experience.

## Portraits of Deans

All of the deans who participated in this study were Caucasian. One was European born; the others were from North America. These nine men and two women ranged in age from the mid-40s to nearly 70. One had been retired for several years, one had just retired, and one had come out of retirement to accept the position of dean. Six deans had been in their positions for a year or less (one of these included the dean who came out of retirement to fill the position). Two deans were planning to go back to teaching after their terms were complete, and one dean was into his third five-year appointment, having been in the position for 11 years. All names used to refer to the deans are pseudonyms.

### *Erick*

Erick had recently been appointed dean after having held the position as interim dean for six months previously. He had been department chair at the same university, but in a different faculty. He was nominated to apply for the position of dean because of the reputation he had developed as department chair.

> If you look back on my personal background, not only have I crossed an ocean and gone from one continent to another to get here, but I've gone up several socioeconomic status levels and many education levels. In the area I grew up in, a lot of kids didn't graduate from high school. I think sometimes I've been lucky, but I've made some good choices along the way, and I work hard.

### *Ernest*

Ernest had been dean for one year at the time of our interview. He had served as an interim dean for 18 months prior to this appointment. He had moved from a university several states away to take this position. Prior to this appointment he had been a department chair at two universities in the southern United States.

### *Neil*

Neil had just been appointed dean at the time of our interview. He had held the position of interim dean for a year prior to this. Neil had been asked out of retirement to serve as interim dean while the university conducted a national search. He had held several other high-level university positions prior to this appointment at the university and in state government. His academic background was in political science. At the end of his interim term he was asked if he would consider accepting the deanship even though he had not applied for the position. He had received notification of the appointment just before our interview. Neil had retired twice from the university, and after each retirement he had been asked to come back and serve the university in different leadership capacities.

### *Theresa*

Theresa had been appointed as the new dean and was just moving into her office at the time of our interview. Theresa had been dean of the university's branch campus in a different community in the same state. Her academic background was in political science, and she had spent many years teaching criminal justice courses through distance learning models.

### *Holly*

Holly had just retired as dean, a position that she had held for four years. She had formerly held positions such as associate provost and department chair at the same university before she was appointed dean.

### *Richard*

Richard had been a dean in the same faculty at his university for 11 years. He was the most senior dean on his campus and the longest serving dean in my study. He had been department chair previous to becoming dean.

### *Lloyd*

Lloyd had been in his position as dean for just over a year at the time of our interview. He accepted this position through a national search and had moved to his current position from a somewhat larger university in a neighboring state, where he had served as a department chair.

### *Thomas*

Thomas had been in his position of dean for a year when we met for our interview. Before accepting this position, he has been an associate provost at a large city university in the midwestern United States.

### *Lewis*

Lewis was just finishing his fourth year of a five-year appointment as dean. At the end of his term he would be returning to a faculty position at the same university but in a different faculty.

### *Howard*

Howard had retired as dean several years before our interview. He had held his deanship for five years and had been department chair within the same faculty before becoming dean.

### *Sam*

Sam had just retired from his position of dean, which he had held for four years. Previously, he had been a department chair in a different faculty at the same university. He was planning to return to teaching in his former department.

## Conclusion

This study focuses on a group of administrators for whom I have developed great admiration, university deans, yet this was also a group of administrators who could draw criticisms. For example, I approached the editor of a journal focusing on Canadian and American educational issues about possible interest in a submission discussing the administrative courage of academic deans. The editor, a university professor, responded, "Isn't administrative courage of deans an oxymoron?" All too often the connection between educational leadership and values or virtues was overlooked. "Understandings about the values and ethics of leadership are still evolving, and it remains a contested field of inquiry" (Begley, 1999, p. 321). Deans, although not identifying themselves as being particularly courageous, discussed many issues that involved their values and ethics. The situations discussed seemed to involve the possibility of politically damaging consequences or potentially dangerous situations. "Because a significant portion of the practice in educational administration requires rejecting some courses of action in favor of a preferred one, values are generally acknowledged to be central to the field" (Willower, 1999, p. 369). This study was conducted to review the values and ethics of deans in an attempt to better understand their administrative courage. Consideration of and reflection on the issues and dilemmas they faced are presented in Chapter Five.

# CHAPTER FIVE

# COURAGE PORTRAYED

Administrative courage emerged through the rich, vivid stories that deans told about their personal and professional administrative experiences. Framed by Moustakas' (1990) principles of heuristic inquiry, this chapter is organized into commonalties or themes that arose from the narratives: those understandings, qualities, conditions, and relationships that for me spoke to an essence of administrative courage. The quotations used in this chapter are not comprehensive, nor are they intended to be; yet I believed that the themes in general and the quotations specifically illustrate or represent themes uncovered in this work. They also allow the reader to glimpse some of the difficulties inherent in postsecondary administrative positions and how these positions affect the individuals who hold them, and to better understand the possible human experience of administrative courage.

Three overriding themes emerged from the transcripts relative to the deans' experiences with courage and seemed to be core to the lived experience. Other subthemes appeared repeatedly in the transcripts and supported or informed these basic themes. This chapter is divided into sections that correspond.

The first theme is labeled the *knowing of courage.* It involves knowing what is the *right* thing to do. If someone does not know what to do or that something needs to be done, then he or she cannot act. Knowledge provides reason and deliberation to guide rational and thoughtful action. Yet how does someone know what is the "right" thing? Courage, as a virtue, pursues that which is right and good. The practice of ethics is generally thought to direct people, not in a prescriptive way, but by providing suggestions about what *should* be done. It was the *should* that directed deans toward the right. Framed within this theme of *knowing* are subthemes that point toward how deans came to know. These include understanding the paradox of courage, ethical principles, and practicing spirituality.

The second section is categorized under *doing*. Not only does courage require knowing what is the right thing to do, but it also involves the ability to do it or to act upon that knowledge. If someone knows what to do but cannot act for reasons unrelated to external constraints, that is not courage. Some people may be courageous but may not be in a position that allows them to act on that courage. In administration there are forms of power and responsibility attached to positions such that the doing of courage is related to an ability to act within that context. Sometimes an administrator may have no opening at all to act in the circumstances, and indeed in some circumstances the courageous choice is not to act. Courage involves a capacity to carry out intention. Subthemes that helped inform me about how deans act courageously included standing up and being called to action.

The third section is categorized as *in spite of*. Every day administrators spend most of their time knowing the right thing to do and doing it. That is not courage. Courage also involves knowing what is the right thing to do and doing it *in spite of* possible negative consequences or fear. The *in spite of* theme involves knowledge of what is to be feared and intentionally facing those fears through action or decision, even though possible negative consequences may result. A perception of threat or fear is necessary for courage to be summoned. Otherwise, courage is not needed. There were more subthemes for *in spite of* than for knowing or doing, possibly because there are so many different factors that influence fear, such as experience, personality, or education. The subthemes relative to *in spite of* included recognizing fear, enduring loneliness, relating to others, and paying the price.

## The Knowing of Courage

The deans I interviewed discussed many situations in which they believed that they had acted with administrative courage during their professional careers, though most thought themselves not particularly courageous. Physical fear was rare, yet all discussed situations that stood out in the deans memories as requiring courage. As they talked about these situations, the deans discussed a process of identifying a problem, intellectually deciding upon a course of action, and justifying that action with reason; this process became the knowing of courage. Lloyd discussed this as an intellectual process. As an academic dean, he had just finished serving as jury foreman for a rape-murder trial when we met for our interview. It was in this context that he began to talk about the knowing of courage.

> It's extraordinarily difficult to judge actions and people. I spent a whole week in a criminal trial trying to figure out something that on the surface seemed cut and dried. But when it comes down to making sense out of differing accounts of reality, it's very difficult. That's what I essentially do [as dean]. Maybe a third of my time is spent on that sort of thing.

Lloyd and the jury wrestled with conflicting accounts of the events surrounding the trial as they deliberated on the verdict. Administrative courage is also a form of deliberation, beginning with sorting through available information in an effort to make sense of it and, in doing so, to seek the truth. However, figuring out what is right is different from doing what is right. One is an act of the intellect, the other an act of will (Sewell, 2002). As deans struggled to figure out what was right, in order to provide them with the ethical authority for action, they were often faced with uncertainty as Richard describes:

> Being a dean is a very political job. What really surprised me about it from a faculty point of view is that you think that you can decide what's right and do it. But what's right is not always clear.

Truth can be hidden behind political screens and within the special culture, rules, and codes of conduct in university systems. Knowing what is right, as Richard stated, was influenced by politics that can create dissonance for deans between knowing what is right and doing what is right. Tom explained as he discussed a decision he made that was not supported by his vice president.

> There was a point where I would either maintain a good working relationship and benefit from that and resources would come, or I would leave. Those are the kinds of things that are judgment calls that have definite consequences: . . . How much will it hurt if I have to change directions and not get support? How much am I willing to accept the pain . . . of loss of resources, loss of prestige, loss of reputation, loss of position? At times you just have to make tough decisions and then hope for the best, all of which we're not prepared to talk about. You constantly feel that you have to make diplomatic decisions.

The subtle repercussions faced by administrators are part of the concealed aspect of the *knowing* of courage and must be taken into account as deans come to know the right thing to do. Subtle repercussions can have far-reaching effects. Richard understood how far reaching they could be:

> I've been here longer than the president and the provost, . . . and as time goes by I have to keep quiet a lot more than I would like. Otherwise I'm continually at odds with the president or the provost, and that isn't in the best interests of the faculty.

For some, choice seemed influenced by university politics and how a dean aligns him- or herself within the institution as Tom explained:

> While trying to balance my office accounts, I found that . . . medical research equipment from the university's warehouse . . . was not where it was supposed to be. I went to my vice chancellor and said I suspected theft in his office. . . . I actually feared some reprisal, but I didn't feel I had a choice. I turned all of the evidence over to the police. The medical equipment thefts ultimately led to the dismissal of a number of highly placed people, including the university's chancellor.

Holly talked about her role on an appeals board and how she aligned herself opposite another dean when she discussed her decision to rule against the handling of a professor accused of sexually harassing two female students.

> We had a professor who was a minority, world recognized author. The university felt he was a plum. . . . Not long after he was hired . . . his drunk-driving citations were reported repeatedly in the newspaper and his license was removed, . . . but he still hung out at the local bar. There was a long trail of complaints from students and staff; but nothing was done. Then came a sexual-harassment complaint from two female students. The students appealed [to the student appeals board] because of what happened at the department and college level. The board . . . issued the harshest ruling that had ever come from Student Appeals . . . recommending immediate dismissal of this professor and pointing out the mishandling of that case at the department level and the level of the dean. In that Student Appeals Board I was the first one to speak up and say, "Enough's enough." Then the woman chairing it said, "She's right," and then the rest of the committee members came along. But until that time I felt pretty lonely.

Ruling against another dean and department chair was difficult for Holly because the dean and chair were widely respected on campus, but she believed it to be the right thing to do.

### *The Paradox of Courage*

Courage involves choice, yet the deans discussed doubts, avoidance, and worry as part of the process of coming to know. The right thing to do in a given situation was not always clear for them. Anxiety and doubt were often present in situations that involved courage. Even when deans seemed to be fully committed to a decision, believed in their course of action, and were convinced that they were doing the right thing, they were still aware that at the same time they might be wrong. Genuine commitment is not without doubt, but occurs in spite of it. Howard commented:

> I think [the provost] was just bull-headed. He had a view of what was right and was so sure he was right. And in this case I was sure I was right. But throughout all of this I was humble enough to know that I might be wrong.

Most of us have faced a similar situation, yet humility may not be something that everyone brings to the table as Howard did. Being certain that you are right, yet at the same time realizing that you might be wrong—this is the dilemma. Deans need to believe in themselves and their decisions and have made a career of doing so while at the same time convincing others that they know what they are doing. Sam described this paradox as follows:

> I believe it is that sort of exuberance and enthusiasm for being successful tempered with some concern, worry, or fear about what might happen if things don't go right.

Although Sam worried about the possibility that he might be wrong, he was able to proceed based on reasoned actions guided by ethical principles.

> Any time you make a change, there is a risk that you're actually going to wind up hurting things more than helping. I thought that there was a possibility that we would do that. I was worried that things would not work out. But it became to me pretty clear that we couldn't just leave things alone.

For the deans it was the combination of believing that they were right balanced against the possibility that they might be wrong that seemed to most aptly illustrate the paradox of courage. Moving ahead with a decision in spite of the fact that one might be wrong was, according to Lewis, an intellectual activity supported by reason:

> I believe the power of the intellect and the rational mind can sort out what is right from what is wrong. I believe we can solve problems, we can create understanding to resolve conflicts, to move forward. It's not easy sometimes to

> figure that out. But if I do honestly feel that something is right, that conviction is extremely powerful, and I cannot walk away from that. I just hope that I am right in those circumstances.

For Lewis, his conviction helped him decide but did not leave him without doubt. As the deans discussed the paradox of courage and pondered what could or should have been done and what they had or had not done, they sought the ethical or moral. Here, Neil attempted to make personal peace with a decision he called the worst he had ever made:

> I had known an individual for a long period of time, . . . more than 20 years, and a woman brought a charge against him on sexual issues. . . . I thought it would be better to have a friend . . . say, "This is what's happening, and these are the charges against you." I did that. . . . He was virtually in tears. . . . The allegation had actually come from . . . a perceived snub in the parking lot of a grocery store. . . . There was no substance to it. . . .I always said that it was the worst decision I ever made. . . . He ended up in the hospital for about six weeks after that. I think I was the right one to have talked to him, and I have no regrets. When he dies, I will say I treated him as a brother. I think I did the right thing, but no good can come of it.

Neil pondered his decision even in the retelling of this story, believing that he made the right choice but being aware that it might have been wrong. This back and forth weighing of choices is part of the paradox of courage, tempered by inner honesty, reflection, and self-evaluation. All people have doubts, worries, and concerns. The deans I interviewed expressed them, but usually within the frame of the paradox, confident about a choice yet at the same time aware that the choice might be wrong. This could also be what having the courage of your convictions means.

### ***Ethical Principles***

Ethics is the process of asking what was the right or correct action and supporting that answer with reason. Ethics is an act of the intellect and part of the process of coming to know. The deans I interviewed frequently discussed ethics and how they used ethics to guide their judgments. The types of ethical concerns most commonly discussed by deans in these interviews dealt with conduct of professors, professor-student relationships, employment issues, and academic honesty.

Most of the deans I interviewed initially took a philosophical approach when talking about ethics and courage. Theresa explains:

> I believe that we're here because students need us to be here. My general philosophy has been that if there are administrative regulations, patterns of behavior, things that inhibit the opportunity students have for a good education, and then we need to deal with them as administrators. We need to . . . remove those obstacles. A faculty member was practically beating students away with a stick. He was so rude and grumpy. Another faculty member said, "The students just needed to get used to how this person works." I said, "You have to realize that we're not here because the university was created for us."

In coming to know what is right through ethics, Theresa asked what a professor should do and how he or she ought to respond to students; Theresa focused on using reason and applying an ethical decision-making model. Tom's example is one of the more philosophical as he talked about knowing right from wrong by using a values system based on spirituality and conviction. Here is his model:

> Do I have a values system based on spiritual values? I think so. I think that gives you the courage to do the right things without doing the wrong thing. If you face some adversity, if you are convinced that what you are doing is the right thing for the right reasons, then you should recognize your professional responsibility. That requires adherence to a values system; you just don't violate your values and feel good about yourself . . .. If you don't have a values system, . . . how do you say, "I did the right thing" if you don't have a sense of what's right? If you have no conviction, no direction in life, no basis for making a decision, what do you base the decision on? You have to act according to your sense of values.

Lewis talked about his choices. He seemed to sense that something was pointing the way for him:

> After considerable study of all the factors, the pros and cons, I found that every way I looked at it, things were pointing in the same direction. Something had to be done, something that should have been done some time ago. . . . I had to eliminate the program if I was going to be a responsible administrator. I had to make this decision and deal with the consequences. I was fairly clear and confident about what was right, but I tend not to enjoy conflict and this was very emotionally charged.

This pointing or showing the way helped Lewis work through the paradox of courage he discussed, that of being fairly clear and confident, yet not quite sure. The words that the deans used when talking about ethics were also revealing, such as "pointing in the same direction" and "vision," which conjure up notions of guidance, visual icons for ethical choice, as it were. Sam advocated an ethic of care that provided his foundation on which to build and maintain relationships. It also guided his decision making:

> Human relationships are the most important thing to people. If you have the right people and you're working together with goodwill, the problems come and go. I don't think administrators should focus all their attention on the problem at hand. I think they should focus most of their concern and attention on the people that they're working with because as soon as you fix one problem or deal with one problem, . . . another one comes through the door. That's just inevitable. . . . What really is important are the people that you're working with and how you work with those folks. I think that is probably my number one conviction.

For Sam, his motivations and intentions were to value and care for those around him, thus structuring his ethical framework. Theresa also seemed to be guided by an ethic of care, but more from a justice perspective, based on her beliefs that people should be treated on the basis of their abilities, not on things out of their control, such as gender:

> I find it highly inappropriate that we treat staff in a lesser way than we would faculty. . . . I've never seen any reason to build distinctions. If one group is going to get a raise, they all ought to get a raise. The fact that someone doesn't have a PhD doesn't make them less than somebody else. I've worked as a clerical person, and I have been mistaken for a clerical person. You sit at a secretary's desk and you're a woman, well, you've got to be the secretary, and it's okay to beat up on us. We need to treat everyone with respect.

Richard's intrinsic motivation seemed to be similar to Theresa's, espousing equality and justice:

> People should be treated equally. They should be judged on the basis of their abilities rather than superficial interactions that are not really important. If somebody can perform really well in their job, then I should do all I can to see that they are treated fairly. . . . When they're not, go to the wall on that. Everybody should be treated equal: man, woman, gays. At least that's my self-conception, and that's very important.

However, Theresa and Richard's philosophies were slightly different. Although both focused on human needs and rights, for Theresa, respect for individuals was central; whereas for Richard, equality among individuals was most important. Literature on gender and postsecondary education identified skills effective to women leaders as embracing a "feminine style" including "interpersonal, intuitive, and co-operative skills" (Brooks, 2001). Another reason that may account for the differences in their philosophies is that Richard, the longest serving dean in my study, had been instrumentally involved in the equal opportunity or affirmative action mandate as one of his main responsibilities as an administrator (Brooks, 2001; Currie, Thiele, & Harris, 2002) during the legislation's implementation stages on his campus.

Tom had internalized his ethical values that seemed to give him comfort and guidance as he sought answers to questions about right and wrong. As the deans discussed the paradox of courage, they also demonstrated the practice of ethics by asking questions about what one ought to do and justifying those answers with reason. Courage was bound to terms such as *virtue*, *ethics*, *morals*, *values*, and *the good*. Situations that required courage were complicated, like this one that Tom described, in which he wished that he had done things differently:

> Margie directed the research office. She had gotten herself at odds with the vice chancellor, who brought around a document he wanted all the associate vice chancellors to sign. It was a statement of no confidence in Margie. I wish now that I hadn't signed it. . . . Something in the back of my mind told me that there was more to it. It turns out that there was. I knew if I didn't sign I would endure the consequences, but I should have spoken up and said, "I won't sign this. I don't think it is necessary. It's inappropriate," but I didn't. I wish I had stood up.

Tom's reflection on this situation and his honest admission that he wished he had done things differently are part of the practice of courage through ethics. Such practice allows an individual to come to know what is right for future practice by reflecting on that which he or she believes is wrong. The ethics and values that deans bring to their position affect the way they make decisions, the things they worry about, and why they worry about those things. Ernest added:

> When I dismissed a clerical position here [at this university], it was for the wrong reason [budget cuts], and it was pretty painful. When I dismissed a clerical position [at my former institution] it was because that person was not doing the job she had been hired to do. Neither decision felt good because I was affecting someone's life. I know that I did the right thing with the person who was at fault and not doing the job she was hired to do. The other person had an impeccable service record and was just a victim of a budget decision. So that loneliness, that having to make that decision, whether it's right or wrong, it still has the same implications. You just can deal with it a little bit easier when you know that you're doing the right thing for the right reasons.

Firing someone because of poor performance seems to be a decision an administrator ought to make. Terminating someone who has had an impeccable service record because of budget cuts seems less easy to justify. For these deans, negative results from decisions for which there were no clear moral justification seemed to cause them great concern.

### *Spirituality*

Because this research involved courage, it also involved ethics, morals, and the essence of being; therefore I believed that spirituality should be part of this discussion. But when I asked about spirituality in my interviews, without exception , the deans said that they were not generally asked such questions. Some found this a difficult area to discuss.

Lewis viewed spirituality as providing comfort, security, and peacefulness for his friends, something of which he would like more. His search for meaning and coming to know the truth seemed to be strongest when he was engaged in intellectual pursuits:

> There is a spirituality concerning what's right and what's wrong. I've always been driven by that, but in my day-to-day life, I don't think that I have that. . . . I wish I had that solace that I could rely on that. I have friends that do have a very spiritual component or set of religious-based values, and they just seem so much calmer and more able to cope with stress and not take it personally. I think they must have that kind of spiritual value system or state of mind that I wish I had. The only way I get it is in my research and in contemplating and dealing with ideas. When I write, that's when I achieve what I think is almost a different spiritual dimension.

Searching for something that he did not have was how Lewis described his quest for spirituality. Holly searched internally, as she stated in this quotation:

> When I have to make a tough decision, I make it in a quiet place, on my own, consulting a higher power that I find within.

Theresa described her spiritual moment as being initiated by an external situation that had profound personal and intellectual impact on her:

> One of the things I felt like I needed to do [when I took a new job] was go to an autopsy. I am probably the only living person who never even took high school biology. I was determined I would stand by the door for a quick escape in case I needed it. It ended up to be just me and a pathologist, and it happened to be SIDS death, . . . a young child. He started explaining things to me. I had never seen

> anything from the inside before. It was absolutely beautiful. I know that sounds morbid, but the colors and the symmetry and the shape—for me the really spiritual moment was realizing that we are, as humans, much more than the physical beauty that makes us. There is something beyond that. I think of that a lot, that there is more than what we see.

Theresa's intrinsic guidance, realized from this epiphany as she came to some personal understandings about spirituality, was that what lies beyond the physical body is more than we can see, and it is the unseen that for Theresa provided her guidance. As Howard reflected about his career, he seemed to have come to two personal understandings:

> I have a certain set of values and beliefs that include my Christian values. When I was younger I was more fearful to declare them, . . . but as I got older I was more open to those kinds of things. I think that was better because people knew I had declared myself and wasn't secretly trying to influence other people to believe what I believed. I started a prayer group and Bible study that met in my office once a week. Graduate students and professors used to come. It was no secret. Those who wanted to come came, and together we prayed for the faculty, prayed that good values would remain and be strong.

As he aged, Howard felt that he had become more confident about declaring his values, and by declaring them he reaffirmed them to himself and those around him. They became the basis for how he knew what was right and how he practiced doing the right thing. Neil also talked about spirituality from the perspective of religion, as had Howard. Both had faced religious discrimination, Howard within a university system, Neil as a Christian minority in a foreign country. For Neil, knowing what is right was guided by his Christian perspectives and influenced by his human frailty:

> As a Christian, I would hope people would say there's something special about me; and if there isn't, then I haven't lived to the spiritual or manifested spirituality in my life. To me it's not proselytizing; that's always a bit embarrassing. I spent two years living and teaching in mission schools in Africa as a government employee. . . . I was not one of them; I was an American, was young, had married a very young bride. . . . So I've been where someone who was Christian was very discriminated against. . . .

> Probably the most hurtful experience I have ever had is when I have fallen short of what my own beliefs would guide me in doing. And when I've been bad; it's really a difficult situation. I want to apologize by making amends in my life, because it is just hell.

When Neil felt that he had fallen short of his personal expectations, he was speaking to the whole breadth of the human existence and the nature of being. By reflecting on personal disappointment when actions are incongruent with beliefs, he essentially described the human situation.

The deans indicated that they came to know what was right by seeking guidance from a personal belief system, values, or convictions. Some prayed to a higher power for guidance; others did not as mentioned by Erick:

> I'm religious, but I don't pray to God for guidance; I'm not one of those. I may well be of Catholic mentality, . . . but I don't look for assistance from deities, because it's unreliable.

Some deans told me that they found meaning when they were meditating, running, researching, or reading; others talked about a sense of being guided or accepting guidance. The process of searching for guidance, however this came to the deans, seemed to help them determine what was right as they came to know and understand relative to administrative courage.

## The Doing of Courage

Knowing what to do—the right, moral, or ethical thing—and *doing* it are different. As previously mentioned, the first is an act of the intellect, the second, an act of will (Sewell, 2002). In this section I explore this act of will, intention, or energy as it relates to administrative courage. Holly commented:

> There are times when, whether you feel like you will be backed up by the institution and its policies or not, you simply do what is right.

It is the doing of courage that conjures up physical images. These images imply a sense of bodily strength such as standing one's ground, standing up, shaking it off, and holding fast. The action, calling forth or doing of courage, for the deans seemed to involve an energy or summons of emotional and physical strength. They described such experiences metaphorically. For Lloyd:

> There have been times where I just gulp and go ahead. I try to figure out ways that I could avoid doing what I have to do, but I realize I have to do what I have to do.

The "gulp" that Lloyd described is the body's way of psychologically pushing down or swallowing one's fears. Theresa talked about putting her fears aside in order to allow her to deal with a situation:

> It's almost like when one of my children gets hurt. I become real clinical: . . . "Okay, I have to be calm; I have to do this." That's kind of the way I process it. I think it's a relief when it's over, but never, never glee or joy or anything like that. You have to do something hard, but when you've done it, it's just kind of a relief. Maybe I feel a sense of satisfaction that I actually did something that was hard, but I never, never feel joyful.

Theresa indicated that she certainly did not enjoy the doing of difficult tasks involving courage, yet there was still a sense of satisfaction from the action. Avoidance was something that also came to mind when discussing courage and fear, almost as if a viable escape route would allow someone a reasonable way out of having to deal with a difficult issue such as for Howard:

> I was well equipped with information and knowledge and felt like I had the security of a group behind me. I had the breastplate on and was pretty sure the arrows wouldn't come through.

The protection of armor that Howard put on was in fact protection from research and political maneuvering, yet the metaphor was descriptive of the process that the deans went through to prepare for what they deemed personal or professional attacks, implying that the doing of courage can be dangerous. Others talked about the experience from a retrospective position with a sense of great relief once they had courageously acted. Neil's metaphor captures this nicely:

> "The noose was lifted from my neck."

There was a wide range of feelings and emotions associated with courage that the deans addressed. The language used, in particular the metaphors, revealed feelings of being trapped, well protected, or greatly relieved. The doing of courage was experienced both physically and psychologically, apparent in the language that the deans chose to describe their experiences with courage.

### *Standing Up*

The notion of courage for the deans called forth metaphors of movement and physical action. Perhaps the most often used metaphor was that of *standing up*. Deans stand out and they know it. They described themselves with words such as *higher administrator*, *highly placed*, and *highly respected*, terms which situated their positions near the top of a university's organizational flow chart. Although the deans recognized that their positions caused them to *stand out*, they understood that courage was not about standing out; it was about standing up. Rising or standing up to meet a challenge in spite of the things deans feared was part of the "doing" of courage. The deans I interviewed talked about standing up as being difficult not only emotionally, but also physically. *Standing firm*, *charging ahead*, *facing it head on*, and *having legs to stand on* were common examples of physicalized terms of the doing of courage. Courage seemed to be found in the movement. Standing up to face one's fears and to endure the consequences requires effort and energy.

Courage was described as both an action and a reaction. Although the deans sometimes referred to courage as *intestinal fortitude* or *guts*, these terms are closely correlated to standing up. Metaphorically, the intestinal fortitude or guts may supply the energy required for deans to stand as Richard described:

> I like to be on the side of somebody who's been mistreated. That's what makes me feel good, but I've made some pretty dumb decisions. I've stood up for some people who didn't deserve my support. I suppose that comes from the stories my mother read to me as a kid about people taking a risk and standing up for what they thought was right.

Richard saw himself as someone who stood up for those who could not. This made him feel good, but it might also create an interesting sense of reciprocity in those for whom he stood up. Theresa presented an example of such:

> I got married when I was in undergraduate school, . . . and they didn't let me keep my financial aid. . . . The director said, "Well young lady, we aren't here to support your marriage." I was three dollars short for a registration fee for summer school; . . . that was a lot in those days. The registrar's office wanted me to be withdrawn from my classes, . . . but the department head said, "I don't think so. When she gets the three dollars, she'll pay it. I know this couple; I know both the husband and the wife, and they'll be good for it. They're good students, and you can extend the three dollars for another two weeks." I always appreciated that someone would just say, "That is a detail that isn't particularly important."

When someone stands up for us on our behalf, that stance can produce great loyalty. The administrator Theresa described probably did not know how great an impact his standing up for her made, for it seemed to have become part of her personal philosophy as an administrator. The gift that Theresa received when her department chair stood up for her has been a gift that she has repaid many times over the years by standing up for others in her capacity as dean. What I found interesting about Theresa's response was that it linked back to the earlier example she gave about the grumpy faculty member "beating students off with a stick." She believed that administrators need to remove the bureaucratic obstacles that get in students' ways and thus prevent them from attaining their educational goals. Her philosophy may have stemmed in part from her experience of having obstacles blocking her path removed.

Tom's experience was as witness to his dean standing up to the university's president. The doing of courage in Tom's story was described in the physical metaphor of "guts":

> The president of the university made a decision that impacted the school . . . without the dean's input. I was a department head and . . . was in the dean's office . . . when the phone rang. I watched the dean get control of himself. He was angry. He put down the phone and said, "Come with me." We walked into the president's office. The dean walked up to his desk and asked, "Are you the dean, or am I? You did something without my input that impacts my credibility, my character, my reputation, and everything that I do for the school." And I thought that was the most gutsy thing I had ever seen.

Tom's presence may have strengthened his dean's resolve as he stood up literally and figuratively before the president. In Tom's eyes, his dean became more powerful after this incident.

The concept of standing up to someone implies a closeness of physical presence, such as facing them head on. This cannot be done from a distance. There is an implied proximity to that which one fears in the doing of courage, so that the proximity to the source of fear makes one vulnerable. Confronting or standing up to a dangerous or threatening situation is the doing of courage.

### ***Being Called***

Another aspect of the doing of courage was the notion of being *called*. When discussing administrative courage, the deans I interviewed talked about the notion of feeling *called to action*. This metaphor implies an external summons or cry to which there is a compulsion to respond. Such a cry stirs within those who hear it a sense of responsibility on behalf of the other to act. The notion of a *call* is relational, for someone must *call out* and another must hear. *Being called* was also viewed by the deans as a duty or obligation, almost as if they had been chosen to *hear a call* and felt the obligation to answer. There were many ways that deans used the term called, such as *called forth*, *called to responsibility*, *called into question*, *called to mind*, and *called to attention*; but the most vivid examples related to being *called to action*. Holly heard a call and felt compelled to respond:

> There are times that you're called upon to do the right thing, and you just must do it. You can't be afraid, because you have to do what's right. There's something beyond yourself that gives you the answers that you need in tough times when you're making decisions that only you can make and that are lonely.

For Holly, the answers to the call came from beyond and directed her toward the ethical or the right. When Howard used the term calling in a vocational sense, he seemed to respond to the voice of the other:

> I think my calling is to be a leader. We moved into a condo development, and I'm on the board. You know, it just happens; it just sneaks up on you. I decide I'm not going to do anything—then three people come over and say, "You know, you're a good guy, and we'll nominate you."

Howard seemed amused that others recognized or sought out his gifts, yet he was not really surprised, for the others saw his leadership gifts as his calling. They were so much a part of him that others quickly recognized them too. Not every call deems a response.

Still, the concept of hearing a call suggests a cry that must be answered, at least to leaders such as Holly and Howard.

## Acting in Spite of Fear

Courage requires knowledge of what is the right thing to do and the ability to do the right thing. This combination of knowledge and action forms the basis for courage, but there is something else. Administrative courage is not just knowing what to do and doing it; it is also doing it *in spite of* negative consequences or fear. This was a critical aspect of administrative courage, according to the deans. Making decisions about what to do and taking action on these decisions occur dozens of times each day for deans, yet when courage is required, things are different, as Tom stated:

> You put yourself out on the front line, and you need to have the courage to do what you think is right in spite of the consequences, and sometimes the consequences are not pleasant.

Deans are expected, by virtue of their positions, to be assertive and to get things done. Yet situations requiring courageous action are difficult because of the in spite ofs. In addition to knowledge of what needs to be done, one must have knowledge of what should be feared. Acting in spite of one's fears summons energy that enables action. Being able to control or push down fear and move forward in the face of danger is essential to administrative courage.

Most of the male deans talked about courage from a traditional, Western perspective bound by the physical. They used metaphors such as *marching ahead*, *standing up*, and *taking up arms*. The female deans placed more emphasis on connection to others, spirituality and practicing right actions, more in alignment with feminist or

Eastern perspectives. Theresa gave an example of how she experienced such a connection to her brother who had a near death experience thousands of miles away.

> When I was in graduate school in Boston I woke up out of a deep sleep just terrified. I knew something had happened. . . . What happened was that my brother had gone out to the swimming pool by himself, . . . and he fell as he was getting out, hitting his head on the bricks. He was in bed two weeks with a concussion. He said the only thing that saved him was that he was so darned mad; . . . he just thought, "How can I be so stupid?" He dragged himself out of the water. . . . I had a connection over that distance with him.

Theresa spoke of her willingness to allow herself to find meaning in such experiences. Although I did not explore this in depth with her, it would be interesting to study. A number of sub themes informed *in spite of,* such as recognizing fear, enduring loneliness, relating to others, and paying the price.

### ***Recognizing Fear***

Fear is a central part of the theme of *in spite of* relative to administrative courage. If there is nothing to fear, then no courage is necessary, for fear must be recognizable. Because fear can be a nameless anxiety, a known threat, even a threat to one's character, many factors make acting in spite of such fear difficult, such as the possibility that what the deans feared may be realized. For most deans, fear or threat was focused around interactions or relationships with others. Retribution and character assassinations were the embodiment of professional fear for Tom:

> There are many ways you can expose yourself to potential retribution. . . . You may say things in the presence of the president and the vice president and find that your budget is recalled or cut. The more subtle kinds of retribution are forms of character assassinations. Sometime you do things . . . [that] are not exactly what the higher administration wants, . . . and . . . the rumor mill starts; and . . . less than complimentary things have been said about you. If you say the truth will stand, then everything becomes binary in terms of what road you go down and how careful you can be.

The virtue of courage aligns itself with the truth; its pursuit is not straightforward. Robert Frost wrote about two roads that diverge in a wood. His choice, like that of many in administration, became binary. Neil's decision to accept the position of dean came at the cost of his dean's termination in an ironic twist of fate:

> The person I replaced as dean . . . had been terminated and said, "They're probably going to ask you to do it, and you should." While I was sitting in my office talking to him, the telephone call came. It wasn't something I had planned, but I thought I'd take it for a year. . . . He was very upset about being terminated. . . . The bottom line was that after pretty close to twenty years he had gone from a low-level job to dean and back to an entry-level job.

The fact that Neil became his dean's dean speaks to the uniqueness of postsecondary education. Corporate cultures do not make such accommodations. Lloyd had followed a dean who had also been terminated, but this dean received a seemingly worse fate. That may be what worried Lloyd:

> I also have feelings that I'll lose my job and be out on the street through no fault of mine or because of a bad action. As a lateral entry administrator in this system, I have no tenure. Any action could simultaneously be regarded as a fault or as a virtue. Previous deans have been fired. One actually ended up working as a stock clerk in a local department store.

Carrying on with one's duties in spite of ominous thoughts or fears is what Lloyd described earlier as an ability to "gulp and go on." Appropriately recognizing fear and psychologically pushing it down are necessary, or fear can become paralyzing, thus rendering a dean powerless. Deans must be able to distinguish true fear from paranoia, dread, or doom.

The ability to recognize fear is critical to facing it. Tom faced a dilemma in which he had to choose between his convictions and supporting his super ordinate. His fear seemed to be a nameless anxiety about his job security:

> My immediate boss openly challenged me: "Why would you want to do that?" And it occurred to me that what he was really saying was, "Either you're going to be completely loyal to me . . . or not. You've got to make a choice right now. If you choose to go down this road, . . . I'm not going to support you. So think long and hard because of the consequences."

Being true to himself would undoubtedly have resulted in negative repercussions such as loss of position, budget, consideration, or resources. Supporting his super ordinate, although perhaps an easier position professionally, may have been personally harder for Tom. This is an example of the binary nature of truth.

Courage allows one to control and manage fear, and knowing what to fear and having a proper respect for fear are enhanced by courage, the virtue that allows those who possess it to move forward in the face of fear.

### *Enduring Loneliness*

In almost every story the deans told, there was a sense of the relational or the influence of the other on the self. The voice and presence of others was manifest in relationships, responsibility, personal growth, and professional development. Although the deans I interviewed usually knew what to do and most often did it, they found that their actions or decisions caused them to be separate from others. This separateness was expressed as loneliness perceived as connections between people dissolved, disappeared, or negatively changed. Sometimes the courageous actions of deans seemed to cause them to be separated from those whom they were committed to serve. The pain of loneliness was expressed as follows for Holly, Ernest and Tom respectively:

> "I was pretty much hanging out there all alone."
>
> "I don't know if I'm a lone wolf or a member of the pack."
>
> "Sometimes people are like herd animals, but you can feel isolated and alone."

These metaphors are illustrative of the language used by deans to portray their feelings of loneliness. Several mentioned a lack of support from their supervisors. This lack of support contributed to their sense of aloneness. Lewis talked about becoming more guarded because he was not sure whom he could trust:

> I am very careful who I talk to, the people I trust. I have very strong convictions, there's no doubt about it. But, at the same time, I know in my position that I can't always express those. I have to be very careful what I say, to be honest, to put things on the table and not inflame. I have to recognize good ideas and allow people to speak but not to dominate.

Holding a view opposite to that of others on an issue of importance, although important to a dean, was also experienced as loneliness as illustrated by Richard:

> In situations where you perceive that the faculty and department heads are on one side and administrators are on the other side, that's when you're out there alone. That's when it's difficult. I view myself as out there alone, standing up for what I think is the right cause or the right position

Richard positioned himself to stand up on behalf of those who could not. He may have done this out of obligation or because he saw standing up as part of his position. Holly also seemed to feel that speaking up in opposition to the group was important, despite the loneliness this could cause.

> I was the first one to speak up and say, "Enough's enough." Then . . . the chair person said, "She's right." Then the rest of the committee members came along, but until that time I felt pretty lonely. I think that's what you get paid for. I think that people have the right to expect that that's what you're going to do. If you accept the responsibility of these kinds of jobs, then they're yours, and there are times when it's going to be lonely, when you may have to say, "The buck stops here" or "This is the right thing that we have to do," whether I get support from anybody else or not.

Holly felt obliged to speak out and was resigned to the loneliness that came with doing so. Tom had a similar experience:

> Sometimes I feel very, very exposed and vulnerable. I guess the reason why I continue . . . is that I do have a sense of independence, a sense of willingness to work somewhat in solitude. I'm not uncomfortable feeling isolated and am able to function sometimes when I feel I'm moving against the grain. Sometimes people are like herd animals, but you can still feel isolated and alone.

It seemed somewhat contradictory that Tom could feel vulnerable, yet not uncomfortable. This may speak to the strength of character necessary to persist as dean. Being emotionally able to endure loneliness may be an indicator of a dean's ability to persist. The differences in how the deans perceived their isolation could be due to many factors, including personality, skills, abilities, interests, and professional training. Although Tom said he was not uncomfortable about being separated from the "herd," he still felt exposed and vulnerable, for there was no longer safety in numbers. Howard said that he had to summon strength to "separate from the mainstream." Even these metaphors were revealing. Although this study did not examine individual personality differences among the deans, the reader may be interested to note that Tom was a biologist by training and Howard a psychologist. Loneliness was experienced in many different ways by the deans, but perhaps one of the most poignant examples was Lloyd's:

> It's in the nature of an administrator to attract lightening bolts. I found this out when I first became one. It's the job of administrators to take hits and not to respond. The minute you try to respond to verbal assaults of any kind, you just make matters worse. After I had been selected as department head from among my peers, one of my close colleagues, somebody I had related with on a one-to-one basis very well, suddenly saw me in a different light. It was a one-day switchover. It became very negative, and I found no way around it.

This sense of tremendous negativity directed at his administrative position surprised Lloyd, and he found himself immediately separated from those whom, just the day before, he considered friends. The metaphor of attracting lightening bolts vividly described Lloyd pain.

### *Relating to Others*

Some of the main personnel issues discussed by the deans were related to issues regarding tenure, problems that can and do outlast the continuous rotation of deans, and the culture of autonomy and freedom of expression, which tends to promote reluctance to discipline and regulate others' behaviors. Relative to these issues, deans can face long-term, deeply entrenched problems. Most people are risk averse and sometimes put off doing things that should have been attended to earlier. Deans are no different, and as most of us find in such situations, the longer the problems have been going on, the more compounded they become. Holly explained: "His behavior went on for about a year, actually. He had just gone through a divorce, and I want to support people when they're having difficult times."

Looking back reflectively, a dean may indicate that problem behaviors went on for a long time, but when he or she is immersed in the situation, it often is not as clear. Human resource problems tend to escalate over time so that the combined effect of continued problems takes on new significance. One may be able to trace back the problems to a certain incident or episode, but without knowing what may come, it is sometimes premature to act. Erick experienced something similar: "We had a faculty member who was doing a variety of things that were inappropriate, and they'd gradually been escalating." Erick and Holly found that they let negative, inappropriate behaviors go on for years before they accumulated to the point where action was deemed necessary or documentation sufficient to warrant action. Lloyd faced a difficult situation with an employee when he was a new dean. His description demonstrates Erick's and Holly's point:

> The first year I was here we had a faculty member who was manifesting troubling behavior. . . . His behavior troubled a lot of people because it was very flamboyant. He was a former police officer but has been in trouble with the law to the point where he'd even changed his identity a little to try to make a clean break. He's big, although physically disabled, and very angry about that. He uses harsh language, has a lot of personal problems, and is a threatening person. He scares people. He's very angry with me right now; he's angry at a lot of people, but I'm the focus of his anger.

Universities espouse tolerance for a wide range of thoughts and ideas. Sometimes this articulates, at least initially, into tolerance for problem behaviors. Lloyd's situation was current and ongoing, but other deans discussed situations that had been resolved, allowing them to reflect on how such situations had become problematic. Such problems rarely surfaced at the dean's level. They usually progress through the system before the dean became aware of them, and that took time. Holly and Erick both talked about professors who were living in their campus offices. They had actually moved out of apartments and had begun sleeping in their university offices. These stories paralleled each other in that in both cases the employees' personal lives were in shambles:

> A young man I hired . . . began having difficulty at home and eventually was divorced. . . . I suspected that he had a substance abuse problem and had moved from his house to his office. I . . . told the provost what my fears were, and he essentially said, "Handle it however you think you should." That was the only guidance I got from him. I talked with . . . legal counsel, and they simply began telling me all the things I could get sued for.

> He [the faculty member] went away at Thanksgiving . . . for almost two weeks . . . and came to campus a week after classes began [in the fall]. That's a violation of university policy. . . . He had a family on the east coast and a new spouse on the west coast. . . . The pressure to be on either coast or both coasts caused him to be off campus even more. . . . He was buying airplane tickets to go east and west and had less money for rent. . . . Prior to living in his office, he was living in a motel.

Neil talked about a different kind of situation that involved a colleague when he was a professor:

> [A colleague] took advantage of a student and made some really nasty attacks on her boyfriend. . . . He was having a sexual relationship with the boy's girlfriend. . . . He was eventually terminated for that and growing pot in his office and a few other things. . . . The department chair had some special responsibility for it, but probably didn't have a lot of courage. He . . . certainly was not taking strong measures even in the sense of trying to identify if this guy had a drug-abuse or a sexual-abuse problem.

Complex and complicated issues relative to human resources problems such as substance abuse, intimidation, and questionable or inappropriate employee behavior are areas in which many of the deans had not had specific training prior to encountering an incident. Trying to use university policies or procedures to solve such problems sometimes did not work for them either. Lloyd described how he tried to remove a professor by using a post-tenure review process:

> [A professor] has worried many of us. He has been here many years and does not seem to be rational. He was up for a post-tenure review because he had not done well in the last seven or eight years. He does have tenure, but we have post-tenure reviews if the dean or the department feels that it's required. . . . I could not get an outside member for this committee. Two people refused, one saying, "I have a family. I'm afraid to be part of this." . . . It went to a grievance, which was settled to [the professor's] satisfaction. . . . He's off the hook for three years, and I have perhaps some justifiable reason to feel happy about that, at least relieved, because it took me a little bit off the hook too.

Because there is a lot of latitude in universities relative to the behavior of tenured faculty members, some aberrant behaviors persist. Primarily, the deans used empathy when talking about others with such behaviors, expressing understanding and commitment reflective of the "ministerial" aspect of administration. Administrative courage was experienced relationally as an influence of the other on the self. Interestingly, three deans, Sam, Howard and Erick, were all trained as psychologists. Their personal philosophies about others seemed to reflect their professional backgrounds as Sam points out:

> Problems come and go. I don't think administrators should focus all their attention on the problem at hand. I think they should focus most of their concern and attention on the people that they're working with, because as soon as you fix one problem, another one comes through the door; it's just inevitable. What really is important are the people that you're working with and how you work with those folks.

Howard and Erick held similar views as they shared personal philosophies that focused on caring for others, trusting others, and believing in human potential. For Howard and Erick, respectively, they discussed their interest in caring for and about others:

> The most important thing is loving and caring for people. When we meet we spend at least half of our time just getting together, being friends, supporting each other, and finding out what's happening in each other's lives, because I think, ultimately, we have to have that first before we really become a team.

> I'm fully convinced when it comes to working with people that if you give them autonomy and . . . sufficient challenge, the vast majority . . . will rise to that challenge. A lot of things . . . are good examples of that. . . . The committee work and report writing . . . is really a chore. . . . Nobody becomes a university professor to write reports; . . . we become university professors because we either like to teach or research. There are lots of times where . . . I have to rely on the goodwill of other human beings to get something done. . . . I can't say, "Look, I need you to write this report, and I'll pay you three thousand dollars more." . . . I don't have that kind of money, but they do it.

Relating to others was a critical aspect in administrative courage for the deans. Many championed their role as one in which they felt compelled to stand up on someone else's behalf. Whether or how a dean responded may well be based on gender, temperament, personality, or other factors not studied in this research; yet these factors may ultimately determine personal satisfaction with the position and persistence in the role.

### *Paying the Price*

Courage is not collective. Rarely did others seem to know the difficulties that deans experienced or how hard it was for them to stand up. Most deans felt quite alone in their struggles. Because courage was so personally experienced, it seemed to be internalized, which sometimes resulted in illness, fatigue, or cynicism. For the deans, courage seemed to be experienced like pain because no one can really know another's pain; yet when one is in pain, it is then that they know it truly exists. So it seems with courage. In the act of courage, the deans seemed to be able to triumph over the negatives, to challenge the things they feared, and to seek that which they deemed right and noble action. Many reflected on their choices with a sense of lingering doubt. The issues that the deans discussed relative to courage often took months, sometimes years of intense, concentrated attention and were associated with high degrees of stress. Sometimes knowing the right thing to do and doing it did not seem to be enough as Lloyd explained:

> I was involved in a case of open cheating. Five students had brought charges against another student. We had absolute proof that he cheated in five different classes and a paper he had plagiarized. He threatened me physically in class, launched a counter suit, and got off with a very slight slap on the wrist and was allowed to graduate.

Such injustice creates disillusionment, causing some to question whether they would put forth similar energies in the future. Others described the devastating effects of stress on their personal health when they were so often required to stand up. Howard elaborated:

> I ended up with prostate cancer. . . . My struggle with that administration was to a great extent the cause of it. Having studied the relationship between stress and the immune system, I'm convinced that I would not have had cancer had I not had those momentous things that became all consuming. There were nights where I hardly slept. . . . I'd be preparing for a meeting with a staff whose contract was not being renewed. . . . I'd meet with them and their families and offer to help them find something. I'd rehearse these interviews during the night instead of

> sleeping. It destroyed a year and a half of my life. I'm sure it caused me that setback. . . . As far as I know, I could have died. . . . Those things are hard on you.

Holly was also diagnosed with cancer. Both she and Howard had not attended to their health; they become consumed with their positions:

> There was a mole on my arm and I asked the doctor to check it. He said, "Oh, I'm sure it's fine." I kept saying, "I'd feel better if you'd check it." . . . I think I must have been afraid because ordinarily I don't go to doctors. I don't pay any attention to those things; I'm too busy to think about it. . . . That was on a Friday. He called me out of a meeting on Monday morning. . . . I can remember him saying "Sweetheart," and I thought, uh-oh, "you have melanoma. It's advanced, and we've got to get it."

Holly and Howard were survivors, yet the emotional demands of the job came with great personal costs. Both retired after their terms as dean were completed. They were well below the university's mandatory retirement age. Tom, although not ready to retire yet, talked about his personal exhaustion:

> Administration is a tough place to be. You've got to uphold professional standards and the reputation of the institution, and you have to make tough decisions. Administrators have a very short half-life professionally. There are times when there is definitely an emotional response, and I come out feeling completely drained.

The metaphor of the half-life of administrators is an interesting and powerful notion when considering personal costs such as those of Holly and Howard. Lewis, well into his fourth year of a five-year term, reflected on his deanship:

> Looking back on it . . . from a career perspective, I would think very carefully about whether I wanted to put myself into a situation like this again. That may well reflect on why I am stepping down [as dean]. I have only so much energy and time to give to these kinds of leadership issues because demonstrating leadership is a very stressful, challenging task.

Tom, although a new dean, had been an administrator in postsecondary institutions for years. He had also felt the stress: "You place such importance on the situation, pilot yourself through the situation, and kind of feel a threat. Maybe you sometimes wonder if it is worth it."

How deans internalized the difficult aspects of their positions and the long-term consequences of this on personal health were mirrored in their reflections, as were their reasons for persisting. Howard and Sam explained:

> Some of the people who get into these positions like . . . problem solving and getting through crises—it's a challenge. But if you run into the kind of situation we did, that was less than enjoyable. It was too long—a year and a half or so. . . . My wife looks at me and says, "So why are you doing this?" But it is the good feeling after it is solved that you live on, that high that you get when it's worked out.

> There are people who really enjoy confrontation and winning a battle. I think it's important not to let that get out of hand, that competitive part of saying, "Okay, we've taken a risk, and we're going to win this at all costs." . . . It's easy to get caught up in that because administration is a political game. I've known people who've moved to Washington to work in Congress or the Senate, and the ones who succeed . . . say that you have to understand that it's a contact sport; you win or you lose. I hate that stuff, but there are people in administration who feel that everything is a contest. It's easy to get caught up in that macho aspect of it.

The deans I interviewed persisted for many reasons, but it was obvious that their positions were indeed stressful. The cumulative effect of frequently being required to stand up against adversity takes its toll. The themes presented in this chapter demonstrated the multidimensional nature of courage as a process of knowing what was the right thing to do, doing the right thing, and acting in spite of negative consequences or fear. I have portrayed examples of deans' experiences, their struggles with ethical issues, and at times the significantly negative consequences in their day-to-day administrative lives so that a better understanding of the concept of administrative courage and its practice can be gained.

## Summary

Administrative courage seemed to have three major themes: the knowing of courage, the doing of courage, and acting on that knowledge in spite of possible harm or negative consequences. The knowing of courage involved more than just an intellectual process, it also involved knowing the right or noble thing to do; thus ethical issues were involved. While knowing what is right is not always clear, there is a paradox involved in courage, that of believing that the course of action the deans chose to follow was right, yet being aware that at the same time they might be wrong. This was genuine commitment and not without doubt, but in spite of it. Ethical considerations seemed to provide the guidance necessary for deans to justify their choices for action, whether they defined these as values, spiritual guidance, or ethics. The doing of courage was an act of will or intention and involved a summoning of emotional or physical strength to act. The deans described the doing of courage metaphorically as standing up, or swallowing one's fear, reflective of the physiologic response a body experiences when acting in the face of fear. Being called to action implied direction from an external source, a cry that stirs those who hear it. Courage seemed to be experienced as an awakening in many deans because the stories they shared had a compulsion or a sense of having to act on something. While choice was certainly involved, some said they experienced the situation almost as if they had no choice. The third theme in administrative courage was acting in spite of fear. Knowing what to do and doing it take on a different significance in the presence of fear, for it is the fear which seems to define courageous action. Recognizing the possibility of retribution, personal character attacks, threats to job security, or loss of power or position were some of the fears deans mentioned.

Loneliness was another significant fear for deans, one they recognized but accepted as part of their position. Relationships to others were critical for the deans and provided the source of many of their stories about courage for it was in relationship to the other that administrative courage became defined. Issues such as tenure, human resource problems, substance abuse, intimidation, and inappropriate behaviors were the substance of their stories about how they experienced administrative courage. However, many recognized that there was a price to pay in terms of the stress involved in such situations, such as personal health tolls and professional exhaustion. The negative aspects of the experience of administrative courage were discussed by the deans but not portrayed in the literature which may indicate some lack of acknowledgment of the personal demands exacted by administrative positions in the academy.

# CHAPTER SIX

## SYNTHESIS

In my attempt to understand courage, I began to journey through its nature, meaning, application, and identity. For centuries scholars, philosophers, and theologians have tried to understand courage by taking a similar journey. I found that some aspects of courage were illuminated, but many remained in the shadows, still unknown. This may be because courage has such a personal nature. Tillich (2000) believed that courage was essential to being, and May (1975) saw courage as centered within being such that courage affects choice, intention, and commitment through the multitude of decisions made every day. In this chapter I try to portray the essence of administrative courage as a possible human experience through what van Manen (1998) called "an almost unreasonable faith in the power of language to make intelligible and understandable what always seems to lie beyond language" (p. xviii).

Selected quotations from the deans were used in Chapter Five to illustrate the essential themes of administrative courage. As outlined in Chapter Five, three central themes emerged from the transcripts of interviews with the deans as *knowing what is the right thing to do*, acting upon that knowledge or *doing the right thing*, and *doing it in spite of negative consequences or fear*. Recognizing that the themes of administrative courage were only part of the essence, this chapter shares some of the deans' stories about administrative courage, along with interpretations, to extend an understanding of this as a possible human experience. Five stories are examined and related to the literature on courage, ethics, values, and emerging issues in postsecondary education. The chapter concludes with personal implications and implications for research for postsecondary education and administrators.

## Reintroduction

I began researching administrative courage after reading Concordia University's protocol for managing the coordination of urgent cases of threatening or violent conduct (Spilhaus, 1997; see Appendix F). The university had developed this protocol in reaction to the 1992 murders at Concordia University in Montreal. In response, its board of governors commissioned three reports. The first examined the employment history of Fabrikant (Cowan, 1994), the second investigated integrity in scholarship claims (Arthur et al., 1994), and the third was a forensic audit of financial records. Among other things, the investigations resulted in the termination of the university's chancellor and dean of engineering, and restructuring of the National Science and Engineering Council of Canada (NSERC; Arthur et al., 1994; Cowan, 1994).

This chapter presents stories told by the deans followed by an analysis of each. The stories were chosen from the numerous ones told by deans because I believed they illustrated significant aspects of administrative courage.

## Better the Devil You Know

### *Tom's Story*

Tom had just been appointed as a top-level administrator at a major university responsible for a research program. In this new position Tom was charged with overseeing his program's budget. A few months into the job, he found that he could not reconcile monthly financial reports. Each month the statements were presented differently, and the balances did not match those from the previous one. Tom thought that either someone was incompetent or something was definitely wrong. Together with his administrative assistant and the director of the finance division for his research office, they began working on this problem.

One Monday morning Tom went to work and found his research lab's microscope missing. He called the university police and began working with a detective on the theft. What Tom did not know was that this was the beginning of a momentous chain of events that would eventually topple the university's entire power structure. One evening the detective with whom Tom had been working called him at home to tell him that the microscope had been recovered. He asked Tom whether he knew of an individual whose university business card had been found in the pocket of the thief. Tom did indeed; it belonged to a person who worked in the president's office.

Armed with this information, Tom intuitively began reviewing financial records in a different way. He went over five years of purchase requisitions and found that the individual named on the business card had been ordering extensive quantities of medical research equipment from the warehouse that serviced the university and its medical school. None of this equipment seemed to be quite where it was supposed to be. Tom went to his vice chancellor and told him that he suspected theft involving a number of highly placed people, some of whom he reported to. The vice chancellor cautioned Tom not to proceed, citing racial and hierarchal issues and concern for people with good reputations.

Tom told me, "I didn't think that was quite right." Not heeding the caution from his vice chancellor, he continued investigating purchase requisitions and financial records, ultimately uncovering $1.5 million of equipment theft. All of this information was turned over to the detective. Grand theft charges were laid against university employees, and several members of the university police were also arrested. Ultimately, the chancellor was dismissed, and there were other symbolic dismissals. Tom and his assistant had uncovered a theft ring which, according to Tom, either had been ignored or perhaps, through the office of the vice chancellor, should have been anticipated.

In retrospect Tom said, "I didn't feel I had a choice." He chose to do what he believed to be right in spite of strong possibilities that he would face very negative repercussions. The detective had warned him that some of the people involved in the theft ring had some "pretty nasty connections" in other parts of the city. Tom ended his story by telling me that he started watching out for himself, something he had never felt he needed to do before. He was advised not to ride the train after dark, so he started driving to work and walking across lighted parking lots. "I was looking over my shoulder at times, wondering if someone was following me."

Tom was assiduous in exposing the thefts, even though he knew that it might result in personal or professional harm, because he believed that he was doing the right thing. Ivanhoe (2002) called such behavior the outcome of *self-cultivation*, the process by which people develop the capacity to choose the moral course of action undeterred by difficulty or danger. In terms of the premises of administrative courage, Tom knew what to do because he had discovered a problem with his financial records and believed that finding the source of the problem was his responsibility. He suspected the possibility of incompetence or "something else" from the outset, yet his suspicions were confirmed when his own equipment was stolen and a university employee was identified as being involved. Initially, he believed that the right thing to do was to notify the vice chancellor of his suspicions. When the vice chancellor warned him about proceeding, Tom *stood up* with courage. This was where Tom's *doing* of administrative courage began. He conducted a forensic audit covering five years of financial statements and turned all of the evidence over to the police, *even though* he knew that it might result in career-altering repercussions. Initially he may not have realized the potential for personal danger because, when he turned the evidence over to the police, he did not know about the theft ring and its widespread influence on campus and throughout the criminal community.

Tom's was a process that Lakomski and Evers (1999) called *complex rational, context-sensitive risk taking*. Ivanhoe (2002) believed that for people to act courageously, they must cultivate a special kind of disposition in themselves to be able to persevere in the face of danger, and "in order to aim at the good, one must have a clear sense of what kind of thing it is" (p. 68). Tom affirmed his ethical sense of being by acting according to his beliefs about what was right. Ultimately, Tom left that institution to become dean at another university. Legal action is still pending against the people at his former institution.

### *Analysis: Why the Devil Lurks Within*

Financial behavior is such an important part of organizational behavior that it is possible to "follow money trails to track human behavior" (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997, p. 66). What Tom found at the end of that money trail was deception, deceit, and dishonesty. "Income and spending patterns explain a great deal about organizational behavior" (p. 66), and inattention to such does as well. At Tom's university millions of dollars were being spent on research equipment, a great deal of which was finding its way onto the black market. Although this example is not what Slaughter and Leslie were referring to when they addressed academic capitalism, it may help inform us about why it took more than five years for someone to recognize the problem and act on it. Tom worked in a research office, undoubtedly supported by grants. Grant funding creates multiple layers of budgets, accounts, and accounting measures employed to track expenditures. At some universities, grants and their budgets are administered through offices separate from the university's regular financial services. Under normal situations, tracking budget entries and accounting for expenditures takes a sharp eye and a solid understanding of accounting to be able to recognize irregularities. With complex and variable accounting practices, different sets of records and balance sheets, and the many constraints that administrators have on their time, budget tracking may not receive the time or attention it deserves. When there is fraud or theft in a system and intentional attempts are made to hide or disguise such transactions, they become difficult to spot even to the trained accountant's eye. Barnett (2003) discussed the ethics of the balance sheet where values are emptying out of the university. He proposed that simply getting by is the main concern. Recruiting enough students and making sure enough of them pass in order to ensure the receipt of another research grant are examples that he used. Barnett believed that many in the university community are now asking, "And what is in it for me?" (p. 125) and stated that although the answer did not have to be about anything as sordid as money, in Tom's case it was all about money.

Tom met resistance from his vice chancellor for wanting to examine critically and openly what was happening. Tom knew the right thing to do and proceeded. What gives one strength is cultivating a special kind of disposition in order to persevere in the face of danger. Neville (2002) described courage as "the heart to get started and keep going in the face of temptations to the contrary" (p. 119). Tom had both heart and a disposition that allowed him to persist or persevere.

"The complexities that beset universities are so considerable that they are beyond management in any straightforward sense" (Barnett, 2003, p. 164). This certainly does not imply that these systems are too complex to manage, but that no longer can someone take a quick look at a budget sheet and recognize its problems. The same can be said about human resource issues and curricular concerns. Barnett proposed that "values and ethics can gain a foothold if those individuals in such positions of power invest time and effort in articulating and inserting those different values" (p. 130). Acquired knowledge and experience are necessary to gain administrative positions, and values and ethics are necessary to practice courage within that context. Universities must seek leaders who are willing to invest such personal energy. "Virtue is the power of acting exclusively according to one's true nature and the degree of virtue is the degree to which somebody is striving for and able to affirm his own being" (Tillich, 2000, p. 21). Hope must be infused into universities so that we can move beyond the complex problems and value conflicts that exist. "Hope is to believe in possibilities. Therefore hope strengthens and builds" (van Manen, 1998, p. 123). One way to encourage hope is to steward the practice of administrative courage by supporting leaders who reach toward the ethical and noble. The next two stories told by Howard and Holly will be analyzed following Holly's story.

## If I Should Die

### *Howard's Story*

Howard fought the "big war against central administration" after his central administration proposed reducing programs from four years to two years as part of a major budget-reduction plan. The provost had decided that three committees would vote on the program changes. Howard attended each committee meeting and argued adamantly against the provost's position, believing that when he left the room he had convinced more than half the people to vote in his favor. The provost knew that too. After Howard was asked to leave the committee meeting and before a vote would be called, the provost would say, "This is just too important a decision to vote on right now. Let's give this some thought and vote at the next meeting." In the meantime, the provost would lobby individually with his people, who by the next meeting voted in his favor. This happened after the academic advisory committee and again after the planning and priority committee meetings. The final committee vote was to be taken at the May meeting of the General Faculties Council, which consisted of representatives from all faculties, all deans, and a number of students.

Howard decided that he was not going to let the same thing happen at the General Faculties Council. He was a member of that committee as dean and did not have to leave after giving his presentation. He also knew that the General Faculties Council was the last to hear the proposal and that the president would be in attendance.

Howard made guesses as to which deans might be sympathetic and arranged to meet individually with each of them, saying, "Here's my problem. I hate to talk about the provost; he's my boss. But he's goofed here, and this is why." He would end the meeting by asking the dean if he or she was going to support him. Howard and his staff devoted hundreds of hours to preparing for these meetings for they knew that this was the most crucial decision the faculty had faced in 40 years.

Reflecting on the day of the meeting, Howard said, "I'm not sure if it was God or the devil, but he [the provost] had a terrible cold that day. Somebody was on my side, because he wasn't as bright or as sharp as he would normally have been." The provost made the same presentation he had made at the other committee meetings, and then it was Howard's turn. Howard made such an impassioned plea to save his faculty that he finished to applause. He had been a member of the General Faculties Council for many, many years, first as an associate dean, then as a dean; and he knew that this was the first time the committee had ever applauded. The provost knew that too.

Just as Howard had predicted, the provost suggested the vote be postponed. So, as planned, Howard's associate dean called for an immediate vote. More than 60% voted against the proposed cuts for Howard's faculty. Howard then turned to the president and said, "I assume, Mr. President, that the budget cut you proposed for us was based on this vote. Therefore is it correct to assume that my faculty's cut will be the same as every other faculty's?" The president said, "Yes, your cut will be the same as the others," and in that moment the battle had been won. But this is not where Howard's story ends, for he would soon be fighting a much more personal battle.

Howard retired after his term as dean, well before the university's mandatory retirement age. Shortly thereafter he was diagnosed with prostate cancer. According to Howard, "A year and a half of my life was destroyed, and I am sure my cancer was a result of it." A psychologist by training, Howard had studied the relationship between stress and the immune system and was convinced that he would not have developed cancer had he not had to endure those momentous things that had become all consuming. He talked of nights when he would hardly sleep because he'd be preparing for a meeting the following day with a staff member whose contract was not being renewed. He told about how painful it was for him to meet with staff members and their families about the cutbacks and resulting job losses. He would offer to help them find something else and would rehearse these interviews during the night instead of sleeping. Fortunately for Howard, his cancer was caught and successfully treated; yet he reflected, "I could have died if my wife had not booked a medical appointment for me against my will."

Howard had focused so much attention addressing the issues of his job that he had neglected his own health in the process. Holly had also neglected her health, by prioritizing professional issues above personal ones.

## A Dreadful Alternative

### *Holly's Story*

Holly had asked her doctor to check a mole on her arm. She remembered his telling her that it was probably fine, but she insisted that she would feel better if he checked it. Looking back, she considered her insistence on having the mole checked unusual behavior for her. "I usually did not go to doctors and did not pay attention to my health; I was too busy to think about such things." Her doctor biopsied the mole on Friday. On Monday morning Holly was called out of a meeting. "Sweetheart," he said. She thought, Uh-oh. "You have melanoma. It's advanced, and we've got to get it. I've scheduled your surgery for Wednesday." The release form that Holly signed when she checked into the hospital for her surgery read, "The result of not having this surgery is death."

### *Analysis: There Is no "I" in Leader*

Critical to an understanding of leadership is its relationality and the context within which a leader interacts within his or her environment (Begley, 1999; Ivanhoe, 2002; Johansson & Bredeson, 1999; Lakomski & Evers, 1999). Both Howard and Holly experienced the totally consuming nature of their roles as dean to the point that both had placed so much importance on attending to the *other* that *self* was denied. Although Holly did not attribute her cancer directly to her job as Howard did, she did talk about the all-consuming nature of her position, that even regular medical check ups had been overlooked because she was "just too busy." Hodgkinson (1999) described it as follows:

> Administrative man or woman is continuously engaged in action of some kind . . . which, if not always stressful, is always demanding of energy. In consequence, the psyche is pressured. Any spare time is occasion for guilt that there should even be spare time. (p. 147)

May (1975) proposed that there was a need for constructive use of solitude, allowing us to "retire from a world that is too much with us" (p. 66). May believed that people are afraid of solitude. If so, it may explain why administrators focus so much on *the other*. Tillich (2000) argued, "Only through continuous encounters with others does one become and remain a person" (p. 91), yet this does not mean that these continuous encounters should come at the expense of the self. "Loneliness is experienced as the absence of some person or personal presence who has been a significant part of one's life and is now gone away" (Rouner, 2002, p. 41). Some deans seemed to find that creating an emotional distance between themselves and others helped them become more objective in their positions, yet this distance may have made them inexplicably alone in their jobs and at the same time disconnected with themselves.

Hodgkinson (1999) identified human potentiality as an introspective look at self-development through conscious and free choice and defined "true will to power as the very crux of leadership" (p. 146). Both courage and the will to power are manifested in the intention. Yet the doing of courage can be felt physically as a knot in the pit of the stomach or the gulp before going on, causing the body to absorb negative experiences and emotions as they are pushed down or internalized. These may later surface as stress-related illnesses such as cancer, which is what Howard believed.

When Howard first became dean, his faculty's budget was $20 million. When he retired five years later, Howard had led his faculty through the university's most devastating era of budget cuts, suffering losses of more than $5 million. These losses would have been much greater if the provost's plan had passed. Situations such as Howard described can become so significant to those involved that they seem to overwhelm. Howard knew that he needed to do everything in his power to save his faculty. The provost proposed strategies to deal with an ever-diminishing university budget on a large scale as a form of political economy, something that Fiske (1998) identified as "analysis at the macro level; it cannot recognize social differences because social differences are brought into play beneath its level of analysis" (p. 375). The reality of the situation was that there were not enough available resources to meet the demands. The increasing costs faced by public education will force programs to remain financially viable or be squeezed or closed (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2001). This presents what Axelrod (2002) proposed as the most serious threat to liberal education: "Recent government policies privilege certain academic endeavors over others, namely applied science, high technology, business, selected professions, and mission-oriented research, all at the expense of the social sciences and humanities, the fine arts and basic scholarly inquiry" (p. 86). Slaughter and Leslie (1997) discussed the political economic theory of resource dependence as "those who provide resources to . . . universities have the capability of exercising great power over those organizations. Stated in simplest terms, he who pays the piper calls the tune" (p. 68). This tendency to recognize or reward some academic endeavors over others is "reinforced by globalization, commercialization, and market forces that now steer the direction of universities" (Axelrod, 2002, pp. 86-87). Howard's faculty was not one of the faculties that generated significant grant income, and when the provost decided that Howard's faculty could suffer greater cuts than others, he essentially set up a competition for funds. This seems to be part of the process of marketization of postsecondary education.

Howard knew all of this, and he also knew he was facing the most significant decision his faculty had experienced in the past 40 years because of it. Howard felt that if he was not able to successfully persuade deans to vote against the proposed change, his faculty would suffer losses greater than any reflected on a balance sheet. Howard had been an administrator for more than 30 years, and this was the only time he had seen the views of his entire faculty become cohesive on an issue.

The stand that Howard took in his "battle" with the central administration is consistent with what is portrayed in the literature in that administration is a form of life in which wills enter into a complex domain of conflict, reconciliation, and resolution (Hodgkinson, 1999). Howard was so committed to the belief that a two-year program was not educationally sound for his faculty and might indeed be its demise, that he described the experience of contesting this proposal by using military metaphors. Administrative courage is not a lesser form of courage than the courage of those who perform heroic, physical feats on the battle field; it is another kind of courage, one needed to confront a different time. Deans fear subtle or overt repercussions, marginalization, isolation, and loss of position. Some deans contextualized these within the constructs of the soldier on a battlefield as Howard did when he described his role in the process: "I never felt myself a politician; I never needed to be, but in this battle, I did."

Howard persisted through months of lobbying, planning, politicking, and negotiating. Although it was not until after he retired that he was diagnosed with cancer and had to face the fear of dying, he spoke metaphorically about that year-and-a-half process as "going into battle" and putting on "the breastplate." These metaphors placed courage in the realm of bodily harm and the prospect of death, yet this was not what was being experienced by the deans. This language may be traced back to what Taylor (2002) described as the "war inspired courage" influenced by the concepts of duty and honor in 19th-century America (p. 84).

Miller (2000) proposed that "no theory of courage can ignore war or the experience of fighting" (p. 12), nor can it separate the notions of courage and manhood. Ivanhoe (2002) discussed accounts of courage in Western philosophical tradition as being rooted in "an elite male warrior culture of ancient Greece where courageousness in battle and comradeship in arms were central to life" (p. 65). Howard had internalized his worry and fear so that even though he was not facing death as a warrior, it was indeed the prospect of his early death that faced him. Miller stated, "Courage and cowardice have a rich political and social history. They have inevitably been part of the ideologies that justify and maintain hierarchies of men over women" (p. 11).

This is part of the hero-rescuer persona that, when filtered through the lens of administrative courage from the perspective of language, can be understood by applying insights from other arenas to the field. In this case the metaphors of battle and fighting seem pervasive possibly because the social production of knowledge in academia continues to be dominated by men through social connections of men, masculinity, and management, and postsecondary education is "not immune from the more general historical and cultural constructs of management" (Hearn, 2001, p. 71).

Philosophers expanded the concept of warrior courage to include a sense of virtue and an aim toward the greater good or an ethical end (Ivanhoe, 2002, p. 65). We live in a different time, with complex, multilayered issues that call out for a courage that can be embraced by those who seek to do the virtuous, right, and noble in spite of negative consequences. This does not mean that a person must face physical danger or personal harm to be courageous. Nor does it mean that courage is undertaken as self-preservation, for courage can be on behalf of another. In the situations described by deans, they seemed to be standing on behalf of those who could not or did not stand for themselves. This may be a precept of their positions or an expectation of their agency, but I think it is more. When the deans reflected on times when they acted with administrative courage, what is prominent is the notion of administration as ministering to or serving others, from its French origin *ministrare*. Reflecting on that time, Howard said of his provost:

> I think he was just bull headed. He had a view of what was right and was so sure he was right. And in this case I was sure I was right, but I was humble enough to know that I might be wrong.

What is the right thing to do in a given situation is not always clear. Howard faced the possibility that his political maneuvering might make things worse for his faculty. The paradox of courage that May (1975) described places anxiety and doubt as part of commitment. Yet the back and forth weighing of choices and the constant political maneuvering took a tremendous personal toll on Howard. He felt as though he were on "a kind of roller coaster ride which went on six months." Slaughter and Leslie (1997) characterized these political negotiations as complex, fluid, rapid, and nonlinear.

Howard knew that, in all actuality, the provost could have cut his faculty's budget without committee input, but he tied his budget decision to those votes. In seeking committee support, the provost tried to control knowledge and power (Morgan, 1998). By controlling the information received in committee, the provost controlled the foundations of decision making and postponed crucial votes. By controlling agendas and strategies, he tried to force or guide others' attention toward his point of view. He may have believed that his influence would wield enough weight to carry the vote. It almost did. "Both policy makers and practitioners know that policy decisions are more rhetoric than real" (Johansson & Bredeson, 1999, p. 58); yet in Howard's case the consequences he personally endured as a result of contesting the policy decision his provost was proposing were more than rhetoric. They were emotionally devastating and physically damaging: In Howard's words, "I could have died."

According to Lakomski and Evers (1999), the fundamental questions of what leadership is and what makes for an effective leader have not been answered. The reasons, they believed, were a lack of theoretical and conceptual developments, competing or inconsistent definitions, and incompatible methodological approaches.

Answers are needed for questions about how individuals become energized and under what circumstances a leader will be most effective. This is what Horwitz (2000) called the *energy of intention*.

## Tenure

The next two stories are about deans' experiences with tenure: one in denying it, the other in having it denied. Discussion of the findings they represent follows.

### *Try as You Might, You Can't Say Goodbye*

#### *Lloyd's Story*

As a new dean, Lloyd found that many things had been allowed to just ride over the previous years, especially the two years before he started his position. It seemed that threats of litigation prevented action. Lloyd decided to begin to confront some of those situations. In his first year, he conducted a post-tenure review for a sociology professor who had been at the institution for a long time but had not done well in the past seven or eight years. Although this sociology professor had tenure, Lloyd's institution had a procedure for post-tenure reviews when a dean felt that it was warranted. The professor had produced no research, his teaching evaluations were poor; and he had no real record that could defend a continuing appointment. From a personal perspective, his behavior was troubling. He used harsh language, seemed irrational, and responded flatly; all of this frightened people. Lloyd decided to address the issues of performance by calling for a post-tenure review.

As he began putting together a post-tenure review committee, he found other professors unwilling to serve. Two flatly refused, one saying, "I have a family. I'm afraid to be part of this." Lloyd finally did put a committee together to hold the review. The committee's recommendation was that tenure be denied. The professor took this to a grievance with his faculty union. The grievance's arbitration overturned the committee's decision to deny tenure, citing procedural irregularities. Lloyd had been one day late in submitting necessary paperwork for the review process. That was the sole point used to refute the committee's findings. Dealing with the residual effects of unresolved situations such as this is stressful. As Lloyd indicated, " [The professor's] very angry with me right now, angry at a lot of people, but I'm the focus of his anger." Yet, because the grievance had been settled in the professor's favor, Lloyd recognized, "I have perhaps some justifiable reason to feel happy about that, at least relieved, because it took me a little bit off the hook."

## The Dean Who Refused to Stand

### *Ernest's Story*

Ernest, like Lloyd, framed his experience with administrative courage around a situation with tenure as well, except that it was his own tenure review that became the focus. Ernest had been selected as department chair from among a national pool of candidates. Before accepting this position, he had been a tenured associate professor at a level-one research institution. When he accepted this new position, he knew that the institution did not grant tenure automatically.

Ernest's appointment began in July. A national accreditation visit was scheduled for November. This would be its second visit to the department. Because it had failed the accreditation visit two years before and because of low department performance, the previous chair had been removed from the position but remained as a tenured professor in the department. In preparing for the November visit, Ernest found a letter from the accreditation board stating that if the department had not corrected the problems by the time of the board's second visit, accreditation of the program in question would be terminated. The letter had been dated two years earlier, and Ernest could find no evidence of any attempts to correct the problems. Fearing that his department would lose the program unless changes were made, he set about to correct the problems.

The department was very fragmented after Ernest's arrival, with about a third of its members remaining very loyal to the displaced chair, a third loyal to him as their new chair, and a third "sitting on the fence." According to Ernest, the third of the department loyal to the previous chair filed grievance after grievance claiming that Ernest was violating university policy by moving curricular issues forward. All of these were eventually thrown out. The department passed its accreditation assessment, and under Ernest's leadership, in his judgment, the department became one of the most viable on campus. When Ernest took over as department chair, there were 80 majors, and the department had experienced years of declining enrollments. When he left that university, there were over 250 majors, and the department was among the most economically sound and productive at that institution.

But Ernest's story did not end there. The faculty members loyal to the old department chair conspired and were voted onto Ernest's tenure review committee and denied him tenure. And, adding insult to injury, his dean said, "Look, your credentials are impeccable. You'll win this in court. I'm not going to wreck my career by going against a faculty decision." He sent the denial on to the provost and chancellor supporting the faculty decision. The main point of Ernest's story seemed to be the absence of courage demonstrated by his dean who was unwilling to take a stand on Ernest's behalf.

### *Analysis: In Spite of Tenure*

Bercuson et al. (1997) cynically commented on why it is so difficult to conduct a post-tenure review: "Faculty associations and provincial and national associations argue that the process for the award of tenure is long and rigorous, so much so, that once granted, serious appraisal need never be undertaken again" (p. 136). They contended that faculty associations tend to defend professors no matter how obvious the incompetence, and administrators are reluctant to take such action because it tends to be drawn out and costly; the reality is that few professors are actually removed by the process. Lloyd's example was a case in point.

The fact that Lloyd proceeded with the post-tenure review as a brand new dean says something about Lloyd. The fact that missing a paperwork deadline was sufficient reason to allow the professor to remain says something about the system. It may also be why, when Lloyd moved into the position, he found that so many things had been left unattended. The challenge a case like this presents for deans is that it involves more than dealing with mental illness or a disillusioned professor; it is about self-interest. Lloyd argued:

> With tenure comes a fundamental comfort level that turns everything into a selfish question at some point or another. There is a never-never world of the tenured full professor where virtually any behavior, short of something that violates the law, seems to be okay, and it is not easy to deal with aberrations.

Generations of students take notes every time a professor says something, which, according to Lloyd, tends to erode self-criticism, a necessary tool for personal reflection and growth. Lloyd continued,

> People begin to believe that they are founts of wisdom and that the evil department chair or dean is responsible for just creating a scene. Sometimes this grotesquely pathological behavior goes on for years.

Lloyd was speaking from personal experience, yet Ernest's story mirrors these sentiments as well, for Ernest became what Lloyd referred to as the "evil department chair," and therefore forces existed to make his life miserable from the moment he arrived. Even as Ernest told this story some years later, it brought up emotional and painful memories. Yet it also appeared to be a seminal experience for him because when he left that institution, it was to accept his position as dean.

In analyzing administrative courage, one central theme has been acting in spite of fear. Ernest talked about coming face to face with fear, but that fear was not his own; it was his dean's. In that moment when the dean told Ernest that he did not want to jeopardize his own career by voting against a faculty decision, Ernest recognized fear. He also recognized the self-interest that Lloyd talked about earlier because Ernest's dean had basically said, "My career is more important than yours." Ernest's dean was certainly responding with fear and avoidance.

Ernest was ultimately granted tenure after the faculty decision to deny him tenure, which had been endorsed by the dean but then was sent forward to the provost and the chancellor, who stood up to this injustice. They called the dean in and said, "You will change your letter, and you will support him on this." As mentioned earlier, Ernest is now himself a dean.

Because "academics are compelled to adopt practices that are consistent with the demands of bureaucratic institutions that audit their teaching and research" (Hayes & Wynyard, 2002, p. 34), these practices have, at some institutions, denigrated both teaching and research in the process. It takes a courageous administrator to stand up to bureaucratic practices in an effort to address problems. In this case Ernest believed that the credentials he had earned at a top research institution before transferring to his new institution would be valued more highly than they seemed to be. Yet the influences of the marketization in postsecondary education can be seen in tenure decisions, and although neither of the cases presented here really speaks to that, many in academia believe that time is "best spent on the activity that is likely to generate the greatest economic return to the university, namely research" (Barnett, 2003, p. 55). It may be easy to lay blame for the multitude of problems confronting higher education on issues such as tenure, or marketization and its impact on teaching and learning, but administrators must also look closer to home and take responsibility for making ethical changes in their own classrooms, laboratories, and administrative offices.

## Personal Implications

Through the process of conducting this research, from the interviews with the deans to their analysis and interpretation, I have been changed as I have come to know administrative courage. I feel privileged to have been gifted with the stories that the deans shared, stories about personal experiences with administrative courage that changed their lives and in my retelling, impact the reader's. I have also gained insights that have implications for administrative practice, other researchers, and further research. The opportunity to capture stories told by the deans about moments that defined their careers, moments when they acted with administrative courage and times when they did not, their personal and sometimes professional frailties, their triumphs and regrets, was for me a humbling experience, one that will forever change my thinking about deans.

The first implication has to do with how administrators themselves can benefit from this kind of research. A number of years ago I worked as a development officer for a public university in the United States. In this capacity I worked directly for the deans of education and health sciences and indirectly for the deans of engineering, arts and sciences, law, and agriculture in relation to their interests in research and curriculum development associated with the environment and natural resources. I remembered being awed by these academic professionals and the glimpses that they shared with me about their professional administrative journeys. They were challenged by tremendously important, complex decisions that often subjected them to criticism and most did not have colleagues who they could share these issues with for sharing doubts, fears, worries and concerns may make one seem vulnerable and they did not want to be perceived as weak. Further research may help open necessary dialogue in this area. I believe that several of the deans I interviewed found it cathartic to discuss issues related to administrative courage. Most indicated that they had not had the opportunity to do so previously or with such focused attention.

A second implication has to do with selection of participants. Several of the deans whom I have just described agreed to participate in this research on administrative courage, but the majority of the deans I interviewed I had not met before. As mentioned earlier, I knew 5 of the 11. Having known some of the deans before I conducted the interviews facilitated access. It was somewhat more difficult to schedule interviews with the six deans I had not met previously. An interesting side note about this research is that most of the stories shared in this chapter are from deans whom I had not previously known. I found their examples more vivid, more personal, and more revealing. This may be because of the fact that it is less threatening to discuss revealing personal matters with someone unknown. An unknown confidant provides a greater sense of anonymity, and perhaps that causes one to be less concerned about confidentiality or even being judged by the interviewer (in this case, me). The deans I knew before the interviews seemed somewhat more guarded about the specifics of their stories. They knew that I knew some of the people or situations about which they spoke. Even with a code of ethics and an affirmation of adherence to it, there can still be concern; it is only natural. Van Manen (1998) discussed the effects that human science research has on its participants as generating feeling of discomfort, anxiety, false hope, superficiality, guilt, self-doubt, irresponsibility on the one hand; and hope, increased awareness, moral stimulation, insight, a sense of liberation, and a certain thoughtfulness on the other (p. 162). What I personally experienced has made me rethink how I will conduct future research. When at all possible and depending on the nature of the topic, I will select subjects with whom I have no previous work experience or acquaintance.

## Professional Implications

Being an administrator can be very isolating and is often experienced as loneliness. Deans' jobs are complex and demanding because a dean has "full authority or responsibility for everything that happens within the faculty" (Bookhalter, 1999, p. 44). Therefore, it can be difficult to form alliances within faculties or friendships with professional colleagues because of potential conflict, evaluative relationships, competition for funds, budgeting issues, tenure and promotion issues, and other academic problems. The old adage "It's lonely at the top" seemed to ring true for the deans I interviewed. A concern that came out of my interviews was the tremendous personal toll that administrative positions have on those who hold them and how this often results in shortened careers. Of the deans I interviewed, only one had persisted in his position past a single term; another had been persuaded to come out of retirement to accept a deanship. For the others who were near the end of their terms, however, two were retiring or had retired early, and two were leaving the deanship to return to teaching, even though all had been offered the option to stay.

Tom reflected:

> If you look at the sum of all the small net gains, especially those where you've had to demonstrate some courage, I think there are some positive outcomes in nurturing and supporting the college. Deans should provide vision and leadership and find ways to protect and nurture. They are the person in that role. The college follows you and grows with you, but problems last for weeks and months; how to do battles and how to be courageous, these are things that are constantly negative. You know it, you sense it, you can feel that resentment that you're not getting what you think you need. I think that's why in many cases administrators have a very short half-life professionally. University presidents have problems that are sometimes unsolvable. In three, four, or five years they just throw in the towel.

Deans must make decisions in isolation and often cannot justify their decisions to others when it may be helpful for others to know how or why a certain decision is being made. They did not seem to have confidants. Most felt alienated from their faculty members and somewhat unsupported by their provosts or presidents. Many perceived themselves to be in competition with other deans for an ever-diminishing pool of university funds, so even at a collegial level there was little perceived support. In order to correct this problem, it may be necessary for systems to be put in place which reduce or eliminate the sense that deans have of competing against other deans within their universities for funds. Having opportunities for deans to "retreat" together to work on system-wide problems may also allow for a more collegial atmosphere in which they can provide appropriate and necessary support for one another.

Early in my research one professor asked me, "Isn't the administrative courage of deans an oxymoron?" I believe that this stems from the positional distance between professors and postsecondary educators in which deans are demonized by virtue of their positions. Certainly this is not exclusive to deans, department chairs, provosts, or presidents; I am sure that many experience it. Several deans spoke of isolation when they occupied department chair positions as well, but it is something that as an educational community we must address. I found evidence of the demonization of deans that Tucker and Bryan (1988) discussed also in my research with deans. Lloyd stated, "It's in the nature of an administrator to attract lightning bolts. I found this out when I first became one… After I had been selected as department head from among my peers, one of my close colleagues, somebody I had related with on a one-to-one basis very well, suddenly saw me in a different light. It was a one-day switchover. It became very negative, and I found no way around it." The fact that Lloyd's colleague began seeing him in a totally different light, resulted in a very negative experience for both.

This inquiry has served to illuminate the experiences of deans relative to courage and should promote a discourse about ethical, values-driven leadership. There is a great deal of research about postsecondary education, but the voices of deans regarding administrative courage have been largely silent. Yet embedded in the stories the deans told are themes of knowing the right thing to do, acting on that knowledge, and doing so in spite of fear, referred to in this dissertation as *administrative courage*. Woven through the sample of stories shared in this chapter are sub themes that include the paradox of courage, standing up, recognizing fear, enduring loneliness, attending to the other, and paying the price. It is important to discuss temporality in an effort to position the voices of the deans within the framework of higher education. Deans hold visible positions. They stand out and they know it. They described themselves with words like "higher administrator", "highly placed", and "highly respected." These terms situate the positions within post secondary education near the top of a university's organizational flow chart as formal positions of power and influence. The space within which this research took place was bound by the parameters of postsecondary education and all its symbolism.

People interpret or reinterpret their experiences form the perspective of time. In regard to temporality, only one dean spoke of a current situation as requiring courage. The rest talked about experiences associated with their university service or professional positions which had occurred years before our interview (in a few cases more than 30 years prior). These incidents seemed important to how the deans integrated the practice of courage into their lives. It was possible that deans reinterpreted who they once were or now are as during the course of our interviews because of the temporal nature of lived experience.

According to Lakomski and Evers (1999), the "knowing" that is intrinsic to administrative practice cannot be externalized in linguistic-symbolic form. "We just know how to do something . . . like make judgments" (p. 165). Thus, interpreting the invisible "oughts" which are part of the nature and practice of ethics is done through what Moustakas (1990) called *tacit knowing*, or knowing "more than we can tell" (p. 20). What is "right" does not take into account considerations of human motivation, cognition, judgment, and intellectual action (Lakomski & Evers, 1999). Lakomski and Evers proposed that there is a universal truth or right unrelated to motivation and judgment. This was not what I was seeking. The majority of research on administrators has "not been particularly informative on the intent of administrative action or the underlying and motivating values of the actors" (Begley, 1999, p. 213), so I tried to give voice to the deans' alternate views and values to better understand the motivation underlying their administrative action and intention. It is also important to remember that people interpret or reinterpret their experiences from the perspective of time. For most of the deans in this study, temporality was lived time, something that had already occurred. Only one dean gave an example of a current situation involving courage. These incidents seemed important to how the deans integrated the practice of courage into their lives. It was possible that the deans reinterpreted who they once were or now are because of the temporal nature of lived experience. This temporal aspect of experience also relates to the practice of courage, for temporality allows one to reflect on an experience as a form of practice. The practice of courage (Platt, 2002) or the reflecting on past action or inaction to inform present decision making was something that the deans did.

Yet the question of *what is the experience of administrative courage?* Although recognizable as a phenomenon of possible human experience, was not easily answered by the deans. They indicated that they did not believe that they were particularly courageous, but they had no difficulty identifying a time when they acted with courage. In the stories presented in this study, the deans talked about courage in relation to rather ordinary, administrative issues such as tenure reviews, budget audits, and financial cuts; yet none of the stories were ordinary. It is when a situation no longer seemed ordinary that things seemed to change for the deans and they called forth courage. Courage is a process that engages many parts of the self and exists in its application. Because courage cannot be measured against an ideal or imagined in the abstract, it is an action, not an attribute (Platt, 2002, p. 134). Although there is certainly action in courage, there is also knowledge of what is the right thing to do and of what is to be feared. Lloyd reflected, "It's not courageous to do something that has no potential repercussions. Courage comes from an external environment that has threat."

There were many rich and interesting stories told by deans about times when they used administrative courage. Unfortunately, I could not share them all within the scope of this document. The stories chosen in this chapter were in no way more significant than the others; they just helped me illustrate the aspects of administrative courage being discussed. It is worth noting that the deans discussed many issues relative to administrative courage.

There is a need to apply ethics leadership yet, as Willower (1999) suggested, the core problems of ethics are long standing and familiar. The world and life are ever changing and new experiences and thinking vary according to time, place and people. The bigger questions of what is right and good and moral choice endure. Initially, I perceived that physical fear or personal danger was integral to administrative courage. However, I found that although fear at some level is important, it does not have to be physical or personal; most of the fears faced by the academic deans were experienced relative to human interactions, social standings, and political systems. The deans talked about pursuing a greater good through administrative courage relative to the people with whom they worked or the students in their charge. This occurred as a cultivation of an ability to persevere in the face of adversity. Although adversity itself does not strengthen character, it does provide the source from which affirmation of the good arises in response to it. Courage then becomes the offense against adversity (Desmond, 2002), and, as such, reaffirms the good.

Ivanhoe (2002) analyzed the writings of fourth-century Confucian thinker Mengzi and other ancient Eastern scholars and presented a view of courage oriented and cultivated by a "proper relationship with the good" (p. 68). This, according to his readings of these Eastern thinkers, generated the motivation needed to face danger (p. 68). The courage that the deans described was aligned with an orientation toward the good. Tillich (2000) and May (1975) discussed a kind of courage that focuses on an ethical reality, rooted in the breadth of human experience. This concept of courage presumes that courage as a virtue could not be understood without first having an understanding of the nature of being itself. The notion of courage discussed in this dissertation focused on what Ivanhoe (2002) described as the relational aspects of human existence respective to courage.

A final implication, this time for future research, is that better understandings of the deanship would require more investigations of other affective aspects of human behavior such as optimism, ethics, self-affirmation, hope, and optimism as they apply to academic administrators. I believe that focused attention on manifestations of these relational human behaviors can help us learn how to support, nurture, and create them. This is an area of study that has been overlooked in the literature. The powerful, positive emotional experiences of administrators offer tremendous potential for further study.

# Conclusion

Courage is an important phenomenon at all levels of administration and in many diverse settings, but for the purposes of this study, I focused specifically on postsecondary education. Through this research I investigated some experiences or moments of administrative courage of academic deans, subjectively reported to me by the deans. It was important to keep in mind that they were interpreted through the framework of my ontology and epistemology.

Administrative courage, I propose, is the kind of courage that comes from positional and situational knowledge of what is right and emerges from repeated cultivation of practice grounded and oriented toward the good in spite of negative repercussions – knowledge and experience that help one recognize and aim toward the good and that are "cultivated by regular and repeated performance of right actions" (Ivanhoe, 2002, p. 69). Administrative courage is rooted in experience and practiced over time, making it acquired rather than automatic. It acknowledges fear, sometimes embraces it, and yet proceeds in spite of it. Administrative courage is therefore something needed in all universities. It is not an oxymoronic term but a harmonic one. The terms administrative and courage together form a concept which allows administrators to be able to confront their many and complex problems, some seemingly unsolvable. To persist and endure, deans cultivate within themselves the ability to identify that which is the right and noble thing to do, and pursue it in the face of adversity. The rest of us should lend administrators our support in whatever way we can. We do not know their secret lives as administrators, the complexities, the problems, the successes, but we may witness the failures. That is unfortunate, for there are generally many more successes hidden behind the veil through which we cannot see because we are not privy to their private worlds.

By sharing valuable lessons in courage, the deans helped me to recognize the positive power of administrative courage. Reaffirming values as an administrator is important at a time when postsecondary education is faced with substantial issues relative to marketization, globalization, declining revenues, and increasing public pressures for accountability. It is not enough simply to be concerned about a lack of administrative courage in postsecondary institutions. We must seek administrators willing to use it. I admired the genuineness and sincerity of the deans who participated in this study as they helped me to define administrative courage through their willingness to stand up for what they believed. Administrative courage is a way for us all to reaffirm our professional values.

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# APPENDIX A

# GUIDING RESEARCH QUESTIONS

## Appendix A

## Guiding Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to explore administrative courage and courage-building situations that you believe have shaped your career and to allow you to explore and reflect on those experiences that you believe caused you to use administrative courage.

1. In my letter to you, I asked you to think about times when you have encountered what you believe to be administrative courage. Please begin by telling me about one of these times.
2. Did this experience change you? If so, in what ways?
3. Do special events, situations, or people connected with this experience come to mind?
4. Describe what it feels like when you are acting with administrative courage. Without it?
5. Please identify one of the most courageous administrators you have known and a situation you can think of where you believe they acted with courage?
6. How do you respond to fear? What causes you to be frightened?
7. Do you think you have a calling in life?
8. What are your strongest convictions?

Some leaders talk about spirituality as something that guides them when making difficult decisions. Is that something you have recognized in your own life?

# APPENDIX B

# INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

# APPENDIX C

# INFORMED CONSENT FOR TRANSCRIBER

# APPENDIX D

# LETTER TO CONFIRM TRANSCRIPT ACCURACY

# APPENDIX E

# LETTER TO CONFIRM ANONYMITY OF INTENDED QUOTATIONS

# APPENDIX F

# BOUNDING THE CASE OF THE VALERY FABRIKANT MURDERS

## Appendix F

## Bounding the Case of the Valery Fabrikant Murders

The Fabrikant case came to my attention through Concordia University's protocol for managing the coordination of urgent cases of threatening or violent conduct developed in response to the Fabrikant murders. After reading the policy, I began investigating the case behind it primarily using two commissioned reports written after the murders, one to examine the employment history of Fabrikant, the other to investigate the charges of academic dishonesty and violations of ethical behavior claimed by Fabrikant against his colleagues.

I. Concordia University in Montreal was established in 1974 when Sir George Williams University merged with Loyola College – it was a young university without established protocols, policies and procedures.

II. Within the administration there were lingering differences between Loyola and SGW factions.

III. There was no institutional memory. At the time of the murders in 1992, the longest servicing officer had arrived in 1984.

IV. The university administrators demonstrated a reluctance to deal with conflict and to restrain some of its most distinguished and active researchers who were actively contributing to its growing reputation, and its reluctance to divert funds from doing research to policing it.

V. It lacked informal systems of accountability – it was too compartmentalized.

VI. Its administration was also too tall -- too many administrative layers existed below the vice-rector level, which lead to compartmentalization within the university. There was no central system or clearinghouse for disseminating important information. Even after the beginning of November 1991, when many people in diverse units were concerned about and alarmed by Dr. Fabrikant's behavior, there was no real consolidation of the file.

# APPENDIX G

# EMPLOYMENT HISTORY SUMMARY OF VALERY FABRIKANT

# Appendix G

## Employment History Summary of Valery Fabrikant

I. December 1979 - Valery Fabrikant, a Russian émigré arrived at Concordia University and was hired on the spot by the chair of the Mechanical Engineering department.

II. He worked at Concordia for 13 years in a number of positions from technician to junior research faculty to research faculty.

III. Violence seemed to erupt each time his position was up for review or his position was in question.

IV. 1982 - Documented potential violence occurred when a female student accused him of rape. She failed to press charges but the ombudsperson working with her believed that she had been raped and kept the file.

V. 1983, Fabrikant was barred from a French course he was enrolled in due to derogatory and abusive attacks against the teacher and other students. He attended class despite a legal order barring him.

VI. 1989 - The Rector (president) hired personal security in 1989 due to perceived threats from Fabrikant.

VII. Secretaries who were on the front line when it came to dealing with the professor were so afraid of him that several had panic buttons installed.

VIII. February 1992, Dr. Fabrikant wrote a letter to the Board of Governors accusing his peers of conflict of interest, bribery, and professional misconduct. The rector asked the vice-rector to investigate Fabrikant's claims. She basically dismissed them by not investigating appropriately.

IX. March of 1992, vice-rector responded via the rector to Fabrikant in indicating that she found no basis for his complaints.

X. April 1992, Fabrikant again wrote another formal complaint providing more documentation of his claims of conflict of interest, alleged bribery and plagiarism. The rector, again taking the vice-rector's recommendation that these new allegations provided no additional verification, concluded that Fabrikant's claims were unfounded.

XI. In early 1992, Fabrikant began disseminating allegations through e-mail, concerning the academic and scientific integrity of his colleagues. He accused colleagues of plagiarism and misuse of grant funds. One of the commissioned reports later confirmed the merit of many of these accusations.

XII. June 22, 1992, Fabrikant sought to get employer endorsement for a handgun transport permit. This request implied that he already owned at least one handgun.

XIII. June 23, in response to the gun permit issue, an emergency meeting of some senior officers yielded a request to have the rector suspend Dr. Fabrikant under his emergency powers. The rector's failure to do so has been the subject of much comment and speculation.

XIV. August 1992, he faced a contempt of court charge for blatantly criticizing judges in the case Concordia brought against him for his e-mail accusations of academic misconduct.

XV. August 24, 1992, Fabrikant received a letter stating that he would not receive tenure and would loose his job.

XVI. August 24, 1992, Fabrikant brought three loaded guns to campus and shot four professors and one secretary. The four professors died. Two of them he had accused of plagiarism and misuse of grant funds, the other was his current department head, the fourth the head of the faculty association.

# APPENDIX H

# TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW SAMPLE

# Appendix H

## Transcribed Interview Sample

K: In my letter that I sent to you, I asked you to think about a time or a situation where you might have used what you believe to have been administrative courage, and if you could tell me a little bit about that.

DEAN: When I read your letter I thought, Hmm. And then the example you've given me I really haven't come across any really consequential situation like that. But I should preface too in terms of my background, at the end of this month I will have been a dean for one year, so this is the end of my first year. But I've been a department chair prior to that for, I guess, eight years.

K: Here at the (name of university)?

DEAN: Here at (name of university), all at (name of university), right.

DEAN: So in terms of administrative courage, decisions that you make, I guess, that have some kind of impact where you draw a line in the sand, I suppose, and say, "This is it. This is the straw that broke the camel's back." It may sound innocuous, but I guess last summer, before I came up here, we had a faculty member in (specific faculty) who was doing a variety of things that were inappropriate, and they've gradually been escalating, I guess rather like, for example—the things were sort of violations of university rules—nothing big; nobody was in any kind of physical danger, but he would go away on leave—but not on leave; that's the problem. He would go away at Thanksgiving, for example, leave the Thursday before Thanksgiving and come back the Tuesday after, so he'd be gone for almost two weeks. At the summertime he would come onto campus basically almost the day that classes began, or sometimes even—I became—actually, it was the summer before I did something. The fall before I did that, before I acted, he came to campus, I think, a week after classes began, and that's a violation of university policy. You have to be here for the first day. University faculty have huge amounts of latitude in terms of when they can and cannot be on campus. But there's two times when it's clearly written that they must be on campus. So his trips around Thanksgiving, there's nothing written that says you have to be here, and if he says he's going off to do research, then unless I go to the trouble of verifying that, I take people at their word. But there are two times during the year when you must be on campus. One is during finals week, and the second is when the semester begins, and particularly the fall semester. So his behaviors, his sort of absences from campus have gradually been escalating.

And he'd been doing other sort of goofy things in his own personal life. He has a family on the east coast and a new spouse on the west coast. He loves his kids and he likes to go back east and be with his kids, so the press to be on either coast or both coasts caused him to be off campus even more, and that had other ramifications. He was buying airplane tickets to go east and was buying airplane tickets to go west, and so he's got less money for rent. He's not really committed to (name of university) in his behaviors. So at one point he was living in his lab, actually living in his office. He has a fairly large office, kind of like this one, but he had it set up so that he'd take the bookcase and put it on that wall, but here there's an area behind it, so he had a futon back there.

These things gradually—I've giving you the end picture, prior to living in his office and prior these frequent off campus activities that they were less frequent and he wasn't living in his office; he was living in a motel, and we were all sort of laughing and thinking that it was sort of funny that he was living in a motel. But fiscally, it was a sound thing because he was paying a reduced rate for the room each night, and when he was off campus, he wouldn't pay at all, so it was fiscally prudent on his part, but it was just kind of goofy that we had a faculty member living in a motel.

So when was it? I guess it was last summer he left campus before finals week, or during finals week. Whatever way it was, he didn't hold the finals, and that's a violation of university policy. So I initiated proceedings to have his salary docked. And I guess prior to that too I basically evicted him from his office: "You can't sleep in there. We're not—" and several of those things. I guess I could have just let it go, a lot like your example: You could have let lots of things go. I could have let it go and said, "He's not harming anybody living in his office," but actually, he is. It's a fire hazard, and he's got a toaster in there. And, of course, something will happen. He'll be going out to the bathroom in his skivvies one night and there might be a co-ed wandering the halls, and the next thing you know, there'll be a sexual harassment suit or something like that, or a flasher spotted. So I got him out of there. So I guess that was one decision, basically evicting him.

Then the other one was, the one, though, that had more consequence was the one that said, "I'm going to initiate proceedings to have your pay docked for—" Actually, it was more than a week; it was like ten days for him. Final week starts on a Monday, and you turn in your grades the following Wednesday, a week. He also turned in his grades late, so he was out of town, he missed all of finals week, and then turned in his grades late. So it was something like a ten-day period which we happened not to pay. I don't know if it's administrative courage, but in terms of things that I thought about—he's just going to be all pissed off, and the same as your example, somebody's going to be ticked off—that's the one that I can think of.

I don't know; there may well be many others. The example you gave, if somebody had acted early on with this person who was behaving the way he was, then depending upon when you act, there's a level of courage you take, the level of courage you manifest, I would think they're very different. So if you do something early on—I nipped this guy in the bud the second time he did it. If I had waited and done nothing, then I don't know what the situation would be now. So there are lots of day-to-day decisions that have sort of ramifications down the road when it comes to courage. I can just think of other faculty that knew—decided to let someone know early that they're not going to get tenure, that there's really not a whole heck of a lot that you can do to pull yourself out of the hole. That's another thing. That's something else that I've done: moved people out of the department and said, "I'm looking at your resume, and you've got two years to go toward tenure, and there's no way that given the quality of your teaching, given the lack of research, given your lack of research over the last four years or whatever, there's no way that I can see that you can did yourself out of this hole if you're thinking about it as a pinprick of light way up there." But if I had waited in terms of taking action, I could have said nothing, I suppose, and waited for that person to come up for tenure, then said, "Look, you have next to no publications; your teacher's not all that great. We can't tenure and promote you." But some people, I guess, would regard that as a courageous step, if you will, but I tend to think heading it off at the pass way on down is better. So I can't really think, beyond sort of examples like that, sort of day-to-day things, because sometimes you don't know what you're avoiding, what you're fixing by acting today that won't happen.

Actually, it's kind of funny I'm having this conversation. My wife and I were watching a movie, *Family Man*. I don't know if you've seen it—

K: No, I haven't yet.

DEAN: —with Nicholas Cage, but it starts out in 1987 or something where he and his girlfriend, at the airport when he was going off on an internship, I think, field experience, to London as being an investment banker or something, and she has got some budding career in law and they say they are committed to each other and deeply in love and all that sort of stuff and one thing leads to another, and they don't get married and the movie jumps to, thirteen years later. Now he's a huge tycoon on Wall Street, and his life is very different from what it would have been had he married her. So one thing leads to another and meets this guy in the store, and the next thing he knows is, he wakes up in bed next to his girlfriend, who's now his wife, and they have two kids. So his whole life has changed. So there were choices made at one point when he was in London or whatever that they weren't going to get married, and so now he's getting to see what would have happened had he acted, had they gotten married thirteen years earlier. It's just sort of an interesting parallel. You can't tell what you do today, how it change events in the future. It's just kind of like this. There's some soccer, some British researcher doing research on soccer and how basically every kick of the ball changes the events of the game. So if you've got two players to whom you can pass the ball, you pick one, and you make that choice to pass it to A. If you had passed it to B, what might have happened? You'll never know. All you know is what happened; all you know is what's happening now.

So I guess in terms of administrative courage and some of the things I've done have, *I* think, been fairly low key, and hopefully I'd act early on in some of these situations, especially when it comes to personnel matters since becoming a dean. I've made some personnel changes that have been difficult for the people involved, and I think they've been for the better of the college. But I think had I *not* made them, things would have gone on the same way, and that was a way that I wasn't particularly happy with. I was getting a fair amount of complaints about it, and I didn't *have* to do anything; I could have just left it. But it seemed to me to be sort of the right thing to do.

K: Any of the situations that you've talked about, do you believe that you were changed by them? And if so, in what way?

DEAN: I think too you learn by the outcome, and you can go based on the outcome. If it's a good outcome, you've obviously made a good decision; but if it's not a good outcome, you start to second-guess yourself. So in terms of, have I been changed? I guess it would partly be that I guess these situations have worked out fairly well, so

I've been lucky that way, I guess. So I've sort of personally grown. It's, I guess, those self-efficacy I suppose. If you make good decisions and they work out well; then you become more confident in your ability to make more good decisions, so I would assume that if you don't or if you let things slide, then you would sort of maybe question your ability to make the same kinds of decisions.

K: Just getting back to the situation where the professor was sleeping in his office, when his pay was docked, did that bring about a response from him that you expected?

DEAN: I wasn't really sure what kind of response, because he'd already left campus. So I guess what I expected was an irate phone call, to say the least. Instead what I got was an e-mail, an apologetic e-mail. The guy's a very polite guy; he's very personable. We get along well together, and he just realized that he was doing some silly things, and he took his punishment. Again, this is one of the outcomes, I suppose, I think all of them. A bit irate or maybe trying to initiate some kind of grievance; then it would have been different. So the response I got was an apologetic e-mail from that, sort of a reference to trying to be more of a team player, more committed in the future, which I guess was the response—it couldn't have been a better response.

K: Because of the nature of the research that I'm doing, I'm looking for connections between places and events. When you think about some of the situations that we've talked about, do any special people or events or situations come to mind that you associate strongly with what you believe to have been your expression of courage?

DEAN: I'm not really sure that I follow. You mean people that I might have modeled off or—?

K: Mm-hmm.

DEAN: In the past I can't really—in the events that I talked about, I can't really think of any. Yes, I do try to look at other people's leadership styles and see how they respond to things. We have an excellent provost here at (name of university), very calm and strong in making decisions, so I kind of look to her as sort of a model for how certain situations should be played out. But no, I can't really think of any particular people who have influenced.

K: Can you tell me what it feels like when you act from what you believe to be administrative courage?

DEAN: Sometimes it feels kind of scary. Again, it depends on—usually when you're making decisions, I suppose, that fall under the category of administrative courage. There's a certain amount of worry. We're not talking about some mundane decision about where to spend a hundred dollars; we're talking about possibly somebody's career, whether or not to give them tenure or promote them, move somebody maybe in or out to change the composition of the unit.

Actually, just yesterday—we have a chair going on sabbatical and they've had trouble—they've had to find somebody who will be a replacement chair once she's gone. And because of that, I've had to step in, and I haven't been sure that there's anybody sort of left within the unit who maybe has the skills necessary to bring the faculty together and act as a leader. So yesterday I sent the faculty an e-mail telling them that they were going to have an external chair from another unit. You do this and you think, Okay, what's the fallout going to be? Or what's going to happen here? What's the worst-case scenario? So you worry about that (a) okay, what's the immediate consequence going to be? Am I going to get a bunch of irate e-mails, irate phone calls? Or someone's going to come down and start, "Oh, why are you dumping this person on us? Why can't we govern ourselves?" So what is the immediate—I guess as you make these decisions, one worry, concern oftentimes is what the immediate sort of interpersonal consequence is going to be. Is there going to be somebody down here in my face challenging what I just did?

Obviously another one is the outcome: Okay, what's the long-term outcome of this? Should I have let someone from the unit be the chair, or is this going to be the right thing? Again it's like kicking the soccer ball: I'll never know. I made a decision to put the external person in. I'll never know what the result *would* have been had I allowed someone from the unit to do it. Now, there's twenty-twenty hindsight. If this external person doesn't do well, I'm sure there'll be somebody that'll say, "It's your fault. It's your fault that they're in there." So, yes, you worry about what the results will be. Back to the faculty member's pay: I'm sure he could have taken it to a grievance committee. I don't know if it would have been—it's written university policy. He probably wouldn't have won, but it could have made a headache for us.

So, yes, you worry about the immediate interpersonal consequences of somebody being in your face, somebody that's really argumentative. My style is that I just won't deal with you when you're emotional, I'll just send you away. When the faculty starts shadowing me, I say, "Maybe you should call back when you're in a calmer frame of mind, and we can deal with your concerns in a less emotionally charged way." And I will just put the phone down, because that kind of stuff just sort of irritates me, that it's a job, it's just—people forget. It's probably a good thing we're invested in our job, but it's a job; it's just a job. I could be driving a bus, but we're not. I could be in somebody else's chair, somebody else as a faculty member. So that's one thing.

And then, as I said, the true consequences: Does the decision that you make work? Was it the right one? We're not doing experiments here; this is real life. We don't get to see what the alternative would have been. It's just like in that movie *The Family Man* where actually he *is* getting to see what the consequences were, and it's kind of like that in *It's a Wonderful Life*, when you get to see what would have happened had you not. We never get to see what would have happened had you not, although if it's the wrong thing, like in the example that you started out with, what we do know in that case is, had somebody acted in that case perhaps a couple of years earlier, the circumstances that you've described would have been averted. They probably would have been, because they would have been fired, although who's to say? If he had been fired two years sooner, he might have just come back anyway; we don't know.

K: That's true.

As you talked about a situation that you thought you had acted with administrative courage, can you think about one where you might not have acted with courage or where you wish you had maybe taken a different route?

DEAN: Sometimes you put things off. I think my failing is that sometimes I'll put things off for a while, so there's been a couple circumstances, mainly personnel again, where I probably should have acted sooner. Eventually your hand is forced, and you have to act. I'm trying to think of other circumstances. So in terms of that, for example, I guess maybe similar to your example of a faculty member about whom I'd done a fair number of complaints, but I just really didn't act what I would regard quickly enough, and eventually there was a big complaint. Then your hand is forced to help a student who does want to grieve something against a faculty member. Then you have to act. I'm trying to think of situations where I might have made the wrong decision. Again, that's hard to know. I think procrastination or just putting off the decision is the best example I can come up with.

K: Can you think about another administrator who you believe is courageous and tell me a little bit about him or her?

DEAN: The provost is someone that I admire as a courageous administrator. She is willing to challenge others within this state about their thoughts about how universities work, like the (state name) Commission of Higher Education. She stands up for (state) and says, "This is academically sound. This is academically not sound," and tells them, whereas some of the university administrators basically do whatever (the commission) wants them to do, no matter what that—really, in my mind, whether or not they think it is right or wrong. It takes a fair amount of courage for the provost to stand up basically to the people who are paying a lot of our bills and say, "What you have here is a good idea, and what you have over here is not a good idea, and we want to do it this way, not that way."

K: You've talked a little bit about risk and decision making and fear. How do you respond when you feel fear?

DEAN: I usually get nervous; I'm nervous. Depending on the situation, I'm known to be fairly humorous, and so I try and defuse even my own fear or the particular situation with some humor. That's probably it. Sometimes when you make decisions like this—I know that one of the things the provost asked last year when I first became dean at the deans' retreat was a question that made me really wonder about the job. What have you lost over sleep in the last year? I haven't lost sleep over anything.

K: So she was asking for collective information?

DEAN: Yes, she was asking—right, she was asking Deans' Council what they lost sleep over. For some of the other deans a lot of the things that they had lost sleep over. Law suits, cranky interactions with people or what have you, so I haven't really—I was going to say I could probably lose sleep over things, but I really don't think I have this year. I tend to keep a fairly even keel at least outwardly. There hasn't really been anything that's made me afraid this year, although I guess I don't really fear it, but I worry about (ACCREDITATION BOARD). Occasionally I'll think, Oh my God, because something like (ACCREDITATION BOARD) or state review or something that's really beyond my control. This is not, as I have repeatedly told the faculty, "Neither me nor my assistant deans can get us (ACCREDITATION BOARD) accreditation; it's your job." But if we don't get (ACCREDITATION BOARD) accreditation, someone's going to come asking me why not. I know the president and the provost—actually, they probably won't, but it's sort of one of those things where, like in sport, the manager, the coach is the one who takes the rap; but it's really the players who are out there on the field who have to do the job. So we have these big boards out there in our main office area where we're keeping track of progress, report writing for (ACCREDITATION BOARD). To be frank, some of the reports are outstanding. Some of our units here can be national models for the new (ACCREDITATION BOARD) accreditation standards. But some of the others are just drivel; they're tardy, they're poorly written. It appears to me that the unit has no clue what they're doing. You're supposed to write about—for (ACCREDITATION BOARD) now you're supposed to write about the conceptual basis for your program, so conceptually, when you put all of the classes together, how do all of the classes that you offer hang together so that at the end of the day when they graduate, then you have trained a professional? Some units write wonderful conceptual frameworks. They've thought it through. Others are like, holy cow. They should take this class and that class and that one and that one. The hanging-together part is kind of like trying to explain general ed. How do you explain general ed.? For some universities they've given a lot of thought; for others general ed. is simply a smorgasbord where students can pick random classes, and the putting-it-together part never really happens. That's what worries me. We have some units for (ACCREDITATION BOARD) that have done a wonderful job of putting it all together; we have others who are at the smorgasbord stage, or should I have cheese? Should I have lox with my bagel or cheese or what? They're still trying to—and so that sort of worries me, because it's beyond my control. Things that are within my control I'm a lot less worried about, so I think control is a big thing. I mean it is a big psychological factor, and I see it play out for me. Things that I have less control over tend to worry me more in terms of the decision making. If somebody gives me a decision, I can make it.

I'll try and give you an example. We just went through state review here for our programs, and this was the first time the State of (state name) had ever done this. We weren't really sure what they were doing, and they also had no clue as to what they were biting off, especially when they came up here to (name of university), because we have the school in the state. It was basically like—you know those cartoon characters where you hit a brick wall and you just sort of slide down; it was really a mess. That reminds me kind of what happened to them. They managed to fall way behind with all their visits. We couldn't get our report done and so on. But one of the things they did was, they called me up at some meeting and said, "Would you like to pull the (a particular) program from review? We don't think it's all that strong." This is one of these cases; I guess—it's maybe another example where I used some administrative courage. I've been talking to some of these bigwigs down in the state capital that I really have never met. I've only been dean now for six weeks, and here's a big decision on my—and I'm literally at a meeting in the state capital when I get this call. It was kind of like playing poker, but the decision was mine. And so I could have said, "Oh, yes, let's pull the program." But I decided, hell, no. Let's have them tell us what's wrong with it, and *then* we'll pull it, and it turned out to be the right decision, because for whatever reason, they never told us what was wrong with it. I think, in hindsight, they might have been looking for a scalp at our school, because it's nice if the State says, "Look, we reviewed the programs, and (this school) pulled one." They're in a huge argument with another school, the big campus in the state, about what are appropriate majors. At that point, that particular day, I had this decision to make, and so long as I was in control it was okay. If they had called up and said, "We're pulling your (program)," which I suppose they could have done, or "We're not going to authorize your (program)," that would have been a different type situation in terms of less control; they were making the decisions. So I guess that's in terms of responding to things that make me afraid and worried. Those are things that are outside my control. I'm much more likely to—things that I'm not familiar with worry me too—sort of things that are played up to be really important, and they turn out to be fluff and yes, you go through with this, and maybe it really is important as consequential you were lead to believe it is. I guess that's it when it comes to fear.

K: Do you believe you have a calling in life?

DEAN: A calling? No. I look back on my career and how I started out. My background is (specific discipline), so I think about work and people going to work and administration and so on, but particularly things about people's career paths. It's like your general topic of courageous decision making: How much of what we do in life is situationally bound? I wonder about a lot. I look at my career, just my life. One way to look at it would be, you're a bright guy, you work hard, and because of that, people have noticed, and you've kind of moved along. When I became chair of the (specific) Department, the position sort of opened up because the previous chair had ticked off enough of the faculty that when his term ran out, I was encouraged to run against him. This was the first time anybody had challenged him for a long time. It turns out we have these meetings in the department, and I wouldn't say there was a split in the department but there was clearly people who I had ticked off as well with just my opinions. There were people that I had ticked off, there were people who he had ticked off and there were some in the middle; a couple in the middle who liked us both and we didn't know who they were going to vote for. And so one thing leads to another, and the vote to install me as chair was six-five or something like that; it was one person different. If that vote had been the other way around, if one other person had changed their vote, I probably would not be sitting here today. You think about it in those kinds of contexts. Politicians are kind of like this. I won by the hair on my chinny-chin-chin; I just barely won. But once you're in, you're successful and you move ahead. And the same with getting this dean's job: I didn't ask for it. As I said, there were people who started the—I shouldn't say—I didn't ask for it the first time, but I did ask for the permanent position, but after I had gotten to kick the tires for a while. So in some ways there's a certain amount of randomness to it and chance. But then on the other hand, as I said, I could think, I'm a hard worker, I'm competent; people notice that in me; and that's how it works.

Then there are probably others out there who do have a mission in life. I don't know, maybe, there's an extreme example for me, that's a priest. They clearly have a goal or mission in life. I don't really have any goal, for example, to be—a calling. I never had a goal or calling to be a university administrator, even though I am. I like to teach, so I'm actually doing something that I like less than other things that I could be doing. So, yes, I guess some people are. You read about people who are really goal directed. But then you have to think about others who—in industry you think about all these folks in the high-tech industry who—in some ways it's by chance that they succeed. They may say, "Yes, I'm a really dedicated electronics engineer." But you think about Hewlett Packard starting out in Palo Alto, like in one of their garages. Let's say they weren't successful. Let's say that just whatever they came up with in their garage didn't work. We wouldn't have HP today. There was a competence. Back then—you read about some of these case studies in (specific field). It's almost like, man, in hindsight they were so damned lucky that things worked, that it's just amazing. The whole space program, how many astronauts did we blast off into space, especially early on when we were competing with the Russians that, jeez, whether or not they came back was just by some—I don't know—the hand of God, luck with engineering, who knows?. So I don't know. This is sort of one of those philosophy-of-life questions that I don't struggle with but I just sort of wonder about, not why I'm right here on this earth, but how did I get to this particular point? And you look back at things like that—

Up until a couple of years ago I was an (country) citizen; I was born in (country). If you look back on my personal background, a guy from the inner city of (city), (country) the dean of the College of (college) is seven thousand miles away. Not only have I crossed an ocean and gone from one continent to another, but I've gone up several socioeconomic status levels; I've gone up many education levels. The area I grew up in, a lot of kids didn't graduate from high school. I don't know, calling—I don't know, fate. I just think sometimes I'm lucky. I don't know. I've made some good choices along the way; I work hard. But I don't know that I have a particular calling. I have a mission in mind. I want to be a university president; ten years from now I want to be a university president. Now, I have some colleagues here who, I don't know if they have a calling, but they have a mission, and the mission is, they want to be a dean. It's like I'm looking around thinking, you do? You're never going to be one. I hate to burst your bubble, but it's just not going to happen for any of a couple of reasons that are really, bleeding obvious to me, but that are clearly not obvious to them. There's interpersonal or whatever. So I don't know if I have a calling. I tend to think not.

K: What are your strongest convictions?

DEAN: I'm fully convinced when it comes to working with people that if you give them autonomy and if you give your colleagues and your subordinates sufficient challenge, the vast majority of them will rise to that challenge. I think (ACCREDITATION BOARD) is probably a good example. A lot of things that university faculty do are good examples of that: the committee work, some of the other report writing the faculty has to do that's really a chore and that takes away from why they became faculty. Nobody becomes a university professor to write reports, that's for sure. We become university professors because we either like to teach or we like to do research. So there are lots of times where I as dean, I as a chair have to rely on basically the goodwill of other human beings to get something done. I can't give them any more incentives; I can't say, "Look, I need you to write this (ACCREDITATION BOARD) report. For this year I'll pay you three thousand dollars more." I can't do that, I don't have that kind of money. But they do it because they have sort of an autonomy; they are concerned about the quality of their program, their own reputation, whatever way you want to couch it. So I guess one conviction is that people will rise to the challenge if you couch it the right way.

I guess there's some other sort of tree diagram beliefs that fall from that one. I don't think that money is as big a motivator as people say it is. In terms of convictions, I'm a true (name of academic discipline) at heart. I believe in the power of the situation to influence people's behavior. Sometimes, what's the phrase that Elliot Erickson used? Something like, "People who do crazy things are not necessarily crazy. Occasionally we find ourselves in situations where the press of the environment is so strong that we behave in unexpected ways, sometimes good, sometimes not good." I guess those are sort of two big convictions that I have. There are probably lots of other small ones.

In terms of my style, sort of one of the things I try and do that I am tied to is, I try to be fair in terms of convictions and I am convinced that if you treat people fairly, they will respond appropriately. So again, going back to the guy who's pay I had docked, perhaps it was the way I explained that I had to send him a letter back in Pennsylvania explaining what the deal was, and I sent him a letter with a copy of the board policy and saying this has been going on for a while, and it was the final straw. Sometimes it's important to give your reasons about why you're doing this and to demonstrate that you're treating people fairly.

I guess the most recent example of this is, what we have here, at we have faculty salary increases a certain amount of money that's set aside for what's called *parity*, and that means how faculty members in a unit, their salary compares with the average salary of their peers in the same discipline. There are all manner of ways you can—I could divvy up this money. I could ask the chairs and directors to just tell me, "Who in your unit is the furthest from parity do you think?" What I decided to do was something that I hung up on the board here where I decided that by discipline and by years in length so that I was treating the faculty, not by name, but simply as how far they were by years in rank from the comparison mean. So it would be a faculty member in (department), and he's been a full professor for four years. How far is that full professor from other full professors across the country who are four years in length as a full professor? Now, it doesn't matter whether it's my favorite professor or the one that I like the least; it's simply a mathematical case. What I tried to do was treat everybody exactly the same way, and I will be interested to see how it plays out when I send out the memos about what I've done. What I'm assuming is, and I'll be sort of irritated with anybody who might say, "That's not right." I cannot think of a fairer way to do it, because I wasn't looking at names; I was simply looking at the difference between your salary and the average salary of peers in your discipline at the same number of years and the same rank. I just try to treat people fairly some of the chairs and directors in the unit have said that that is something that they think is really good about how I am acting as dean. I am treating the different units the same way basically the same way when it comes to resource allocation with a process of, I don't know if its formula driven, but everybody is weighed up equally, where I think there's been a history—there usually is a history within colleges; when you come from a discipline, you tend to favor your own discipline. And let's face it when you're in (specific college), you favor your own. I know, for example, other deans who have been around at (specific college) for a few years, and you notice after a few years that after they've been a dean for a while, that certain areas—it's usually *their* area—seem to get a little more attention and seem to get a little more of the resources. So in arts and sciences right now the dean is from English. It just seems to me a little more attention's been paid to English. The previous dean was a chemist. While he was dean, the sciences seemed to do fairly well. They got some doctoral programs. And so I guess maybe it's lucky for me. My area is (specific discipline); there's not that much overlapping conceptually between myself and professional clinicians. In a decision early on when I was an undergraduate that there was no way I was going to be a (specific profession), ever. So I guess it may well be an artifact of me coming out of college and not having much in the line of conceptual overlap with any of the units so that it's been fortunate that I've been fair.

Other convictions? No. I always treat everybody the same. I guess those are probably the main ones.

I guess as a philosophy of life, I tend to take things in a fairly—at least I hope I do—take things in a fairly lighthearted way. It goes back to what I said earlier: It's a job; it's *just* a job. I have a nice, interesting job. I could have been a bus driver, and I wouldn't like that probably. But I could have been. But you have to remember sometimes I think—I know people in universities, and I'm sure bus drivers do the same thing. They get really serious about things that are really not that big a deal. They're squabbling over miniscule resources, I guess. When a person constantly reminds me of something I said early on when I was an assistant professor in the (specific) Department, we had some faculty meetings for a long time talking about what we should buy. I don't know; it was like a thousand dollars. People were getting really cathartic in this," Well, I think we should buy some more—I need a new computer, and we should buy—" all manner of things. We spent just a lot of time talking about it, and I remember saying after that hour, "If you look around this room at the salaries that we're all paid, you've probably spent that thousand dollars just trying to decide what to do with it. Just let the chair make the decision, and I'll go with whatever the chair was willing to do." So there are lots of times where you just get too wrapped up in our own importance, and you just need to back off and let somebody else make the decision. Now, that's not to say that that's the case all the time; there are many times when there *are* important decisions made. But I guess, as I think about it some more, it's trying to figure out what's really important and what's not. I've seen some other deans who deal with almost every issue; every issue is critical, and it's like crisis time. I don't think so. There are some things that are big-ticket items, and there are other things that can be put on the back burner, you can put on the back burner for quite a while, and they'll probably go away.

K: Maybe that's why you sleep at night.

DEAN: That probably is why I sleep at night.

K: Some leaders talk about spirituality as something that guides them when making difficult decisions. Is that something that you recognize in your administrative life?

DEAN: No. That's just—no. I come up with good ideas when I'm running. Praying—no, that just doesn't enter into—I'm religious, but I don't pray to God for guidance; I'm not one of those. I may well be of Catholic mentality, sort of ask for things. No, spirituality, religion doesn't enter into anything. I don't look for assistance from deities, because it's unreliable.

K: Those are the questions that I have. I certainly thank you so much for your time.

DEAN: You're welcome.